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# Desert

NOVEMBER, 1970 50c

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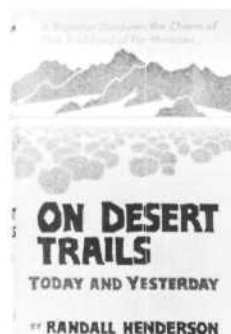


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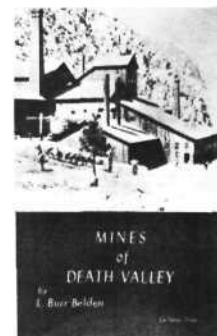
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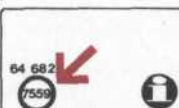
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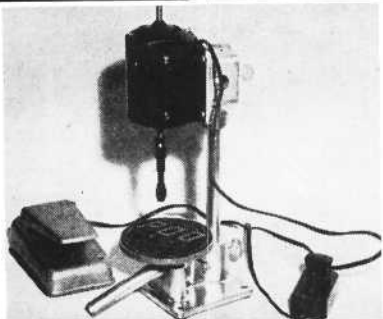
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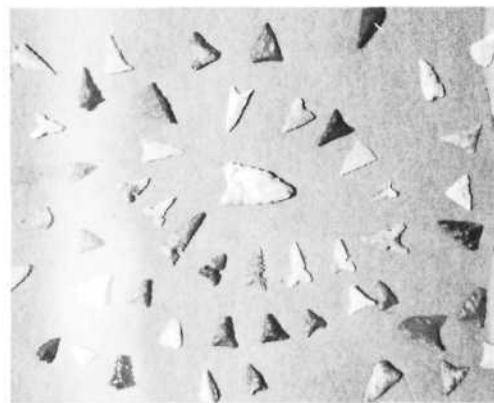
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# A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

THE MONTHS HAVE slipped rapidly by and it is time again when that famous part of California known as Death Valley plays an integral part of this issue—timed to correspond with the annual Death Valley '49ers Encampment, which this year is being held from November 12 through the 15th. The directors expect a huge turnout for this, their 22nd celebration, which originated back in 1949. One of the feature attractions will be the placing of a memorial plaque commemorating the Eichbaum Toll Road. A complete rundown of the Encampment schedule appears on page 25. With the increasing adventure-minded citizens and the ever-shrivelling wilderness and recreation areas, Death Valley has been setting attendance records never thought possible in years past. In talking to Ranger headquarters in Death Valley National Monument I was informed that during the month of July 21,233 visitors were recorded in the Monument and August produced almost the identical number (21,168) of hardy souls who braved the super-hot area enveloping the lowest point in the United States. For the first time accommodations at Stove Pipe Wells Village and Furnace Creek Ranch were operated on a year-round basis. The rangers also assured me that all roads were in excellent condition and the Wildrose Canyon road and the highway in from Beatty, Nevada had been repaved. Please remember that Death Valley is a National Monument and *all* vehicles are required to remain on the established roads at all times. Hope you can make it to the Encampment and look forward to meeting many of our DESERT Magazine family.

In these times much publicity is heaped upon the seamy and unsavory types that gather in groups and communes and create the illusion that the whole country has turned into long-haired bands of nomads going nowhere. This could not be farther from the truth as these young people represent only a small portion of the 15-25 age group. The fact is that the majority of the young people do not create headlines by being upright citizens studying for their future and respecting the law. It is one of these majority youths that I would like to touch briefly on. Here in our backyard in the Coachella Valley one of our subscribers, Charles Barros and his family including his 13-year-old son, Carl Alexander, have developed a keen interest in the desert. After heavy spring winds had shifted the sands of the valley this young man spent his time searching for, and finding potsherds, arrowpoints and beads. The accompanying photo represents the finer specimens that were collected



in a space of three months. They will be on display in our office until February when they will be shown at the Riverside County Fair and Date Festival in Indio. This enterprising young fellow with the help of his brother, Mark, 14, have a rather admirable way of passing time. They gather stout limbs that are straight and sturdy. These sticks are peeled and polished into excellent hiking staffs and anyone who has had occasion to do any amount of cross country walking knows how useful a good walking stick can be. The boys have very kindly allowed us to merchandise their handiwork in our gift shop. With boys like this on the way to manhood, I can't help but feel that all is not lost. Don't you agree?

*William Kuyper*



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Volume 33, Number 11

NOVEMBER, 1970

## CONTENTS

### FEATURES

- |                              |    |                        |
|------------------------------|----|------------------------|
| GOLD OF MONTE CRISTO         | 6  | by John W. Robinson    |
| GIANT WAGONS OF DEATH VALLEY | 10 | by Richard Bloomquist  |
| DIRTY SOCK AND BEYOND        | 12 | by Roberta Starry      |
| DESERT DUNE DANCER           | 16 | by K. L. Boyton        |
| GOLD AT THE SUMMIT           | 18 | by Mary Frances Strong |
| CLOISTERED CHLORIDE          | 24 | by Betty Tucker        |
| ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM           | 25 | Annual Event           |
| THE MOODS OF DEATH VALLEY    | 26 | by David Muench        |
| DEATH VALLEY MEMORIES        | 28 | by Helen Walker        |
| GHOSTS OF GLEESON            | 34 | by Arnold Tilden       |
| TRAIL TO MAZOURKA            | 38 | by Betty Tucker        |



THE COVER:

Sun-dried mud cakes in the Death Valley sand dunes appear as a pattern of footprints. Photo is by David Muench of Santa Barbara.

### DEPARTMENTS

- |                                |    |                            |
|--------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| A PEEK IN THE PUBLISHER'S POKE | 4  | by William Knyvett         |
| BOOK REVIEWS                   | 8  | by Jack Pepper             |
| RAMBLING ON ROCKS              | 42 | by Glenn and Martha Vargas |
| WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT              | 44 | by Joleen A. Robison       |
| LETTERS                        | 45 | Reader's Comments          |
| CALENDAR OF WESTERN EVENTS     | 45 | Club Activities            |
| DESERT LIFE                    | 46 | by Hans Baerwald           |

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# GOLD OF MONTE CRISTO

by John W. Robinson



NOTHING WILL draw men into the mountains faster and in greater numbers than the age-old cry "Thar's gold in them thar hills!"

A gentle mountain stream, a tree-shaded hillside, a flower-bedecked draw can almost overnight be turned into a scene of frenzied human activity — digging, drilling, blasting, hosing if hydraulic works are involved — and in the process Nature's handiwork is literally obliterated.

Then, just as suddenly, the frantic rush is over and the miners drift away, leaving denuded hillsides, crumbling shafts, scattered implements, and tales of bygone excitement. Far more often than not, the boom turns out to be a bust, and all the expanded energy, all the money poured into the venture, goes for naught. The life of a gold prospector was invariably a tale of false hopes and broken dreams, a pattern of expectancy followed by excitement and then disappointment—repeated over and over again.

Along these familiar lines went the saga of the old Monte Cristo Gold Mine, located on sun-bleached chaparral slopes above Mill Creek in the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County.

Today the traveler crossing the Angeles Forest Highway between La Canada and Palmdale passes the Monte Cristo Ranger Station on County Road N3 and, two miles beyond, the Monte Cristo Public Campground. If you visit the latter, pausing to rest alongside trickling Mill Creek under a green canopy of oak and alder, you will see a locked gate at the north end of the campground. Vehicles are not allowed beyond this gate, but it is an easy hike up the dirt road which meanders some two miles up narrow Monte Cristo Creek. At its end, well up on the brushy slopes of Roundtop Mountain, are the faded remnants of the old Monte Cristo — its tunnels and shafts caved in, its machinery rusted and strewn about, its buildings long since torn down. Few visiting the ruins today would imagine this quiet spot was once the scene of frenzied activity. It lies forlorn and forgotten, an eroded monument to man's century-old quest for mineral wealth in the San Gabriels.

But the Monte Cristo has a story to tell. No other mining venture in the Southern California mountains was more involved in legend, drama, controversy or broken

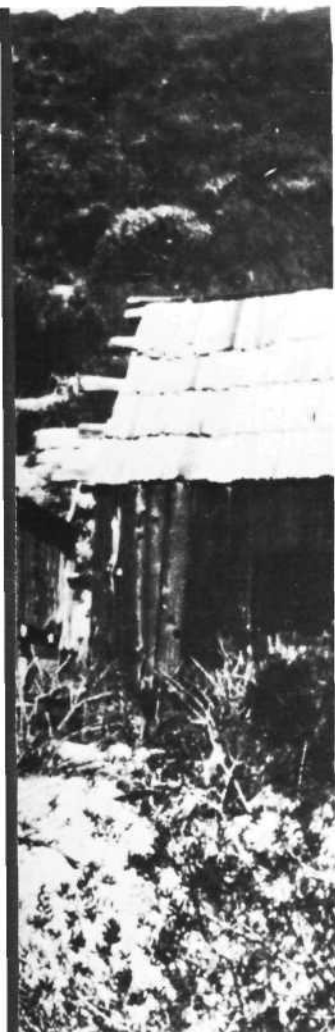
dreams.

Legend says this was actually the fabled Lost Padres Mine of Mission San Fernando, dating back to the 1790s. Mission records reveal that gold was taken from "La Canada del Molino," which can be translated as Mill Creek. However, scholars have never been able to nail down the whereabouts of the Lost Padres and some doubt that such a mine existed.

The bandit Tiburcio Vasquez and his gang of horsethieves supposedly recovered gold ore from the vicinity of the Monte Cristo in the 1870s. According to mountain historian Will Thrall, the bandito's *arrastra* (a primitive device used by Mexican miners for milling gold ore) was discovered nearby in 1916.

It was during the Big Tujunga gold rush of the late '80s that the Monte Cristo we know today started operations. But just who located the gold-bearing veins and began mining them is a mystery. One story says that Mexican miners first worked the Monte Cristo, carrying the ore they recovered down to a crusher driven by a large water wheel. Another version is that the mine was first worked by Indians.





*On the left: The Monte Cristo stamp mill, about 1915. Photo from Will Thrall collection, Huntington Library. Below: the stamp mill as it appears today from approximately the same spot. A fading legacy to man's quest for wealth in the San Gabriels.*

Around 1893 the property passed into the hands of a Colonel Baker. A company was organized and some \$85,000 spent in building a rough wagon road from Acton up Aliso Canyon, over Mill Creek Summit, and down to the Monte Cristo. Heavy mining machinery was transported in and assembled, and buildings were erected. But the enterprise proved a disappointment; very little of the initial expenditure was recovered, and the mine was again abandoned.

Throughout the next 50 years of the Monte Cristo's life as an operating gold mine, two colorful—and controversial—prospectors held the controlling reins.

The first of these, arriving sometime around 1895, was Captain Elbridge Fuller. "Ed" Fuller, with a succession of changing partners, ruled the Monte Cristo for some 20 years. These were two decades of stormy personal controversy and marginal mining success. It seems that Fuller allegedly could never get along with his partners, and one by one they either sold out, were driven away, or met with foul play. One unfortunate partner, Hutchinson by name, was found dead "with his head blown off," according to

contemporary accounts, under very mysterious circumstances.

After several lean years of mining, during which Fuller operated a pack train on the side to make ends meet, the old prospector finally departed for parts unknown.

Around 1915 the claim was taken over by one Fred W. Carlisle, who remained in control of the Monte Cristo until his death in 1946. Before taking over the Monte Cristo he had been assayer in the Randsburg Mining District.

Under Carlisle, the Monte Cristo reached its zenith of activity—during the years 1923 to 1928. Gold-bearing ore was recovered from two groups of quartz veins about a thousand feet apart. To tap the veins, six tunnels were bored, two of them reaching back 425 feet into the mountain. New machinery was laboriously hauled in, including a Blake Crusher and a portable compressor. According to the California State Mining Bureau, a total yield of \$70,000 was recovered from the Monte Cristo in the peak year of 1927.

After that, the Monte Cristo reverted to its familiar pattern of promise followed by frustration. Several promising

"pay streaks" were hit, only to fizzle out just as they appeared to spell "bonanza." Carlisle, hard-pressed to make ends meet, was obliged to suspend operations for several years at a time. During the mid-'30s, he leased the east and west veins to different outside operators, the first and only time the Monte Cristo was not worked as a single unit. From 1935 to 1942 the mine was worked only intermittently, and in the latter year it ceased operations for good. The final curtain rang down on more than a half century of excitement and broken dreams—the mine that never quite lived up to expectations.

Today, anyone can stroll the easy two miles up the lonely road to the old Monte Cristo and visit the crumbled tunnels and shafts, the broken stamp mill, the scattered debris. All is silent, save for the mountain breeze that rustles the trees and the occasional howl of the coyote. For those with vivid imaginations, it is possible to stand among the remains and picture oneself a part of yesteryear's pageant, when grizzled prospectors dug vainly for Nature's hidden treasures. □





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# **Book Reviews**

by Jack Pepper

## **UNCLE SAM'S CAMELS**

*Edited by Lewis Burt Lesley*

First published in 1929, this is a fascinating account of attempts by the United States Government to import camels from Asia to provide transportation across the deserts of the Southwest.

Under the personal direction of Jefferson Davis—who started his campaign for camels as a United States senator from Missouri and brought it to reality when he became Secretary of War in 1853 under President Franklin Pierce—the ill-fated project might have succeeded and

today there might be camels throughout the Southwest—and not just in zoos.

A combination of politics, bad timing, hostility from Indians and whites, and inability to handle the "denizens of the desert" caused the final defeat of one of the most interesting experiments in the winning of the West. When requesting an original outlay of \$30,000 from Congress for his project, Secretary Davis said:

"For military purposes, for expresses, and for reconnaissances, it is believed the dromedary would supply a want now seriously felt in our service; and for transportation with troops rapidly moving across the country, the camel, it is believed, would remove an obstacle which now serves greatly to diminish the value and efficiency of our troops on the western frontier."

Congress finally appropriated the money for the project. This book is the actual journal of May Humphreys Stacey, a young man who was part of the "camel corps" under the leadership of Lt. Edward Beale. The detailed accounts of the hardships, frustrations and—what today appears comedy—encountered by the group of dedicated men and their strange animals makes fascinating reading and is an insight into a little-known part of our Western history.

The diary of Stacey—who later became a colonel in the United States Army—is augmented by a description of how the camels were purchased in Asia and Beale's later report to the Secretary of War. Long out-of-print, the book has just been republished by the Rio Grande Press. Hardcover, 298 pages, \$8.00.

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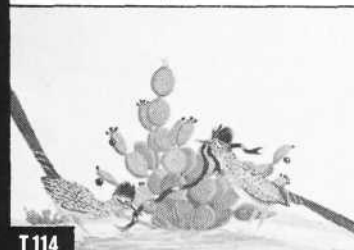
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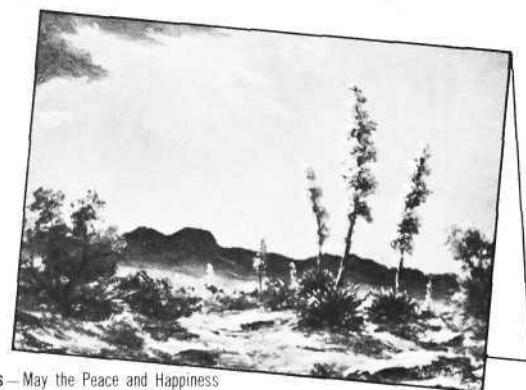
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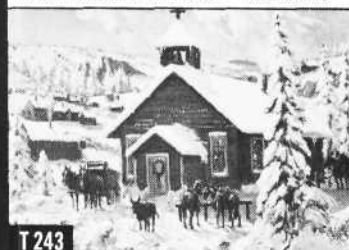
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"Thou fill'st the solitude." — Peace and Good Will at Christmas, etc. — Barks



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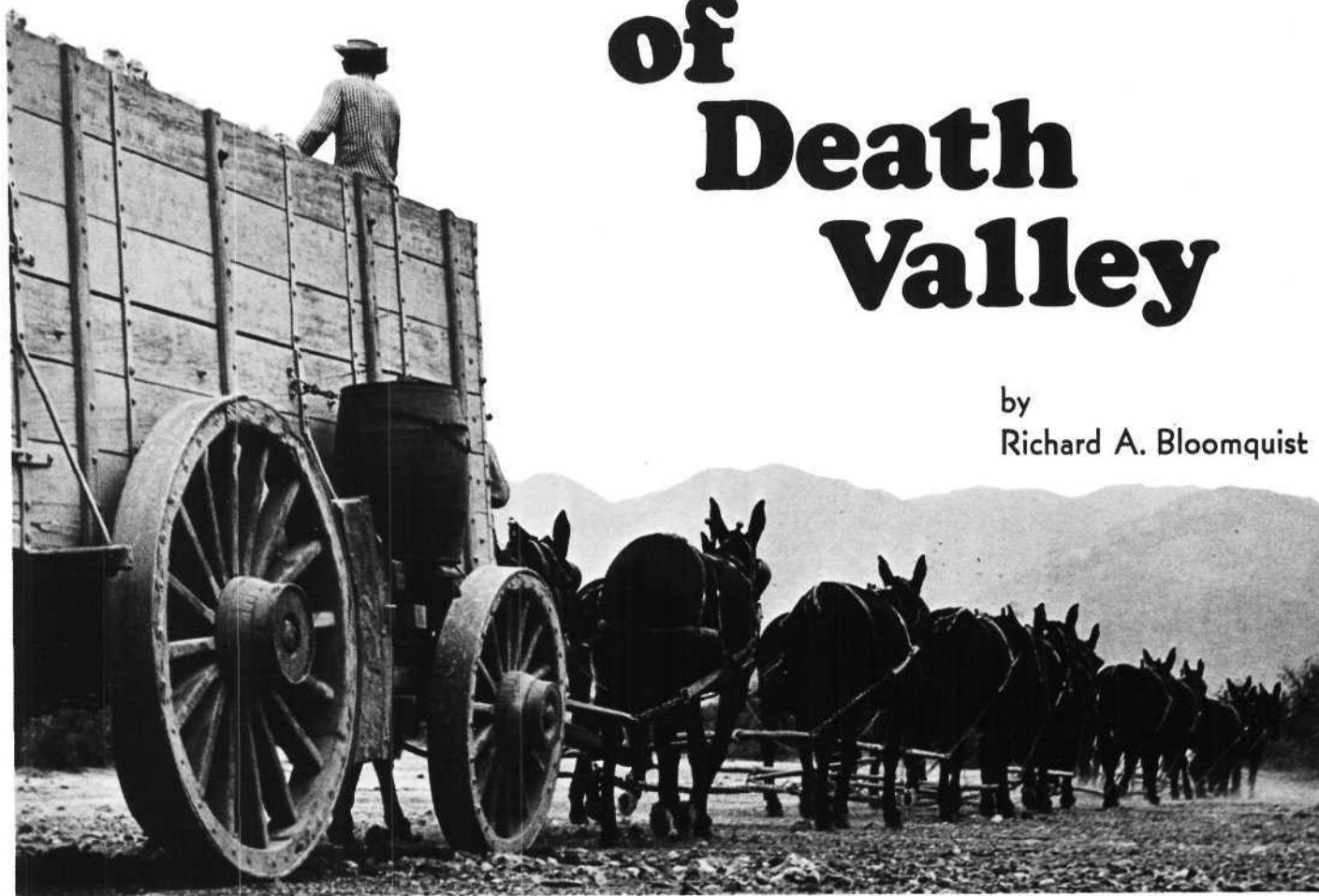
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# Giant Wagons of Death Valley

by  
Richard A. Bloomquist



William Belknap photo

**T**HE ROAD rolls over the flatlands of Death Valley, labors up Windy Gap's grade, and descends Tomesha's western wall. It winds on to Lone Willow and Blackwater, then down to Mojave past Castle Butte. This is the twenty-mule road, conveyor of Death Valley borax.

Between 1883 and '88 it rumbled beneath the ponderous, earth-grinding bulk of some of the mightiest wagons ever built with hind wheels seven feet in diameter—wagons weighing four tons and hauling ten. Their load was borax, discovered in the United States in 1856 and found in Death Valley in 1873.

Isadore Daunet, in the early '80s, produced the Valley's first borax at his Eagle Works near Badwater. Soon afterward, William T. Coleman's Greenland Salt and Borax Company was in production north of Furnace Creek at a refinery later known as the Harmony Borax

Works. With the closure of Daunet's enterprise in 1884, Coleman became Death Valley's lone producer of borax. But he needed a new road to the rail line at Mojave, 165 miles distant, capable of transporting more borax more cheaply than was possible under existing conditions.

Coleman's road, built under the direction of J. W. S. Perry, climbed the immense *bajada* northeast of Mojave, reaching water at Blackwater Well. Next water was at Granite Spring (Granite Wells on modern maps). Then on to Lone Willow Spring, up Windy Gap, and down Long Valley. (Windy Gap is now known as Wingate Pass; Long Valley has become Wingate Wash.)

Now within the confines of Death Valley, the borax road bore north to Mesquite Wells, Bennett's Well, and the jagged salt beds, through which Chinese laborers, wielding sledge hammers, had beaten a passage. Trail's end was in

sight; Greenland (now Furnace Creek) Ranch lay ahead, and a short distance beyond stood the warehouses and great tanks of the Harmony Works.

Over this road the behemoths lumbered. John R. Spears has left us an account of the big wagons' origin, their gargantuan measurements, and their faultless performance in his *Illustrated Sketches of Death Valley* (1892). He relates how Perry, working under Coleman, "obtained, by inspection or correspondence, the dimensions of all varieties of great wagons used by Pacific Coast freighters. With these and the load carried by each wagon spread out before him, he proceeded to design the wagons. The task he had set for himself was the building of ten wagons so large that any of them would carry at least ten tons . . . a train of two wagons was to carry a load for a . . . well-built freight car, and carry the load not over a smooth iron tramway,

but up and down the rocky defiles and canyons of the Panamint Range.

"Because they were probably the largest wagons ever used, and because they were and still are so completely successful, space may be given to their dimensions in detail. The hind wheel was seven feet in diameter, its tire eight inches wide and an inch thick. The forward wheel was five feet in diameter, the tire like that on the rear. The hubs were 18 inches in diameter, 22 inches long. Wagon beds were 16 feet long, four feet wide, six deep. The tread—the width of the wheels—was six feet. Each wagon weighed 7800 pounds. The lot cost about \$9000, or \$900 each. Two of these Death Valley wagons often carried 45,000 pounds and sometimes 46,000 pounds of cargo, exclusive of water and feed for men and team. All ten were in constant use for five years without a single breakdown."

Hauling these magnificent desert freighters was the twenty-mule team, winning fame as never before along Death Valley's borax trail. In charge of the colorful hook-up of cumbrous wagons and tenacious mules were the driver and

swamper. The driver guided the team and wagons, the swamper did most of the rest.

"On the down grade, he climbs to a perch on the rear wagon and puts on the brake; on the upgrade he reasons with and throws rocks at the indolent and obstreperous mules. As mealtime approaches, he kicks dead branches from a greasebrush along the route and pulls up sagebrush roots for fuel. When the outfit stops, he cooks the food while the driver feeds the animals, and when the meal is over, washes the dishes which, with the food, are carried in a convenient box in the wagon . . ." (Spears, *Illustrated Sketches of Death Valley*.)

Perry set up stations along the borax road with spring or hauled water and feed for the mules, and for nine months out of twelve—from mid-September to mid-June—big teams toiled with spectacular success.

But prosperity was short-lived. William T. Coleman's business empire collapsed in 1888, and the last twenty-mule team pulled out of Death Valley over the Mojave Trail. Francis Marion "Borax"

Smith bought the Coleman holdings, but the Harmony Works remained closed. Smith concentrated his energies on the more easily exploited borax riches of the Calico Mountains, a short haul from the Sante Fe main line at Daggett. He used two of the great wagons and their teams in the Calicos until 1898; the others were scattered throughout the deserts of California and Nevada.

Strangely enough, the popular image which links twenty-mule team borax with Death Valley was not born until the Death Valley-Mojave run lived only in memory and the big teams had yielded to the iron horse as transporter of borax. The Pacific Coast Borax Company salvaged the twenty-mule from oblivion by making it the symbol of its product and by fixing this symbol in the public mind through vigorous and imaginative advertising. In 1904 the company polished up one of its old desert freighters, sending it East with twenty mules. Subsequent years saw more trips by more big wagons and their teams. Borax, Twenty-mule Team Borax, Borax from Death Valley—all had become as one. □

Photo courtesy U.S. Borax



*A twenty-mule team carrying borax out of Death Valley.*



**E**VER BEEN to Dirty Sock? If not, there is a possibility you have missed a number of other interesting spots around Owens Lake in Southern California's Inyo County.

Fall, winter and spring are the ideal times for exploring the Owens Lake region. Starting at the southern end of the lake a hard surface road toward Death Valley leaves U.S. 395 at Olancho. This route skirts the wind-swept Olancho sand dunes where numerous desert movies have been made. At 4.9 miles, where the power lines crosses, a left turn on a dirt road for .3 of a mile ends at a spa, known through the years as Dirty Sock. On some maps it is designated as Artesian Pool.

Like most mineral water locations there is a slight odor of chemicals which may be the reason for the name. Old-timers are divided on the spring's name. Some claim it used to smell like old socks while others believe it got its name from prospectors and weary travelers soaking their tired feet and washing out their socks. From past descriptions it appears the odor rising from the water is now far less offensive and the temperature of the water has changed from hot to warm.

Whatever Dirty Sock was, today it is a pleasant spa with a swimming pool, shaded picnic tables and scenery varying from the snow-tipped, rugged Sierras of southern Inyo County to the great white expanse of the nearly dry Owens Lake. Man-made facilities add comforts and a windbreak but the desert still edges in and leaves no doubt that 100 years ago the old pool, reflecting the peaks of the Sierras, was a welcome sight to any traveler.

This spa, open to the public, not only commands a colorful view but overlooks and is part of an exciting historical era. Geologists find evidence that 4000 years ago the shoreline of a huge lake was 200 feet above the present valley floor. The mountains towered far higher and have worn down by slow moving ice and water headed for lower levels. At one time the lake overflowed into Death Valley. Later, evaporation left the present saline deposits on the valley floor and along the foothills of the Sierras.

The early explorers found friendly Indians around the lake and Dirty Sock was the scene of squaws doing their early morning wash. But when settlers moved in, taking the land they wanted without

*In Keeler the last  
of the old railroad  
cars that ran  
on the Carson  
Colorado, rest  
in total abandon-  
ment a short  
distance from  
the depot that  
still carries  
the name but  
no longer serves  
a train.*



# DIRTY SOCK

by Roberta M. Starry

regard for the Indians' hunting area or living pattern, trouble started. Battles raged in the Dirty Sock area when the white man attempted to interfere in the Indian's ritual of eliminating ineffectual medicine men.

No battles disrupt the peace around Dirty Sock today. Prospectors on foot and burro have been replaced by men in four-wheel-drive vehicles using metal detectors in their prospecting for gold and treasure.

Few settlers remain in the valley since the water is drained off for use in Los Angeles and the Indians come to Dirty Sock as any other tourist to enjoy the warm mineral water, the view or to picnic in the sunshine.

Ten miles to the east the main road joins State 190; turning to the left, the route continues between the ancient shoreline and the present dry base of Owens



Here is an interesting back country trip over good gravel roads easily traversed by passenger car. There are uncrowded camping areas, including the Inyo County site which even has a swimming pool—and it's all free!

Lake. Five miles from the junction with State 190 is Keeler, once a busy part of the 1870's silver boom and a soda operation in the 1880s. Today it has relics of that exciting period and less romantic but active talc mill. The streets lack the rumble of ore and freight wagons but the false front buildings, the large old bell at the firehouse, the ornate schoolhouse and empty railroad depot are standing reminders of life 100 years ago. The large old Carson and Colorado Railroad depot dominates the town and a few blocks north, along a now trackless rail line, stand a few of the freight and passenger cars.

At the other end of town, along Malone Street, a modern swimming pool and bath house give little hint of the early occupants of that location. In the old days the area had been a thriving Chinatown with the usual gambling and opium dens, secret tunnels and hovels.

Opposite the entrance to Keeler is a dirt road climbing to a trail that leads to the rock ruins of the Darwin Oxide works. The road goes on up into the silver country but a good turn-around can be made at a block house just above the oxide company sign. The view is spectacular. Below lies a nearly buried cemetery, a trench to prevent a flash flood from burying the town of Keeler, the remains of a soda plant and evaporative beds out into the great expanse of the dry lake.

Continuing north on 190, three miles from Keeler is a historical marker. Near here the town of Swansea once stood. Buried by debris from a cloud-burst in 1874, there are only a couple of rock-walled cabins and part of the Owens Lake Silver-Lead Furnace to indicate where tons of silver ore were worked into bars weighing 83 pounds each at the rate of 150 bars every 24 hours.

Near here the steamship Bessie Brady was launched in June of 1872. From a 300-foot wharf she picked up bullion and steamed across the lake to deposit the load at Cartago, cutting days off the time taken by freight wagon to circle the lake with a load of silver. She carried 700 bullion bars at a time in a three-hour crossing that stockpiled the silver like cord wood, too fast for freight wagons to haul it out to Los Angeles.

Approximately two miles north of the furnace ruins are the remains of a number of wooden buildings scattered over a wide area on the right side of the road. Here was the terminal of the Saline Valley electric tramway. The operation, from 1913-1930, transported salt out of Saline Valley in buckets over a 14-mile route over the mountain to the site along State 190.

*Continued*

# K and BEYOND



*Dirty Sock, once a spa for Indians and weary prospectors now has modern facilities and swimming pool.*



## Keeler Chevron Service

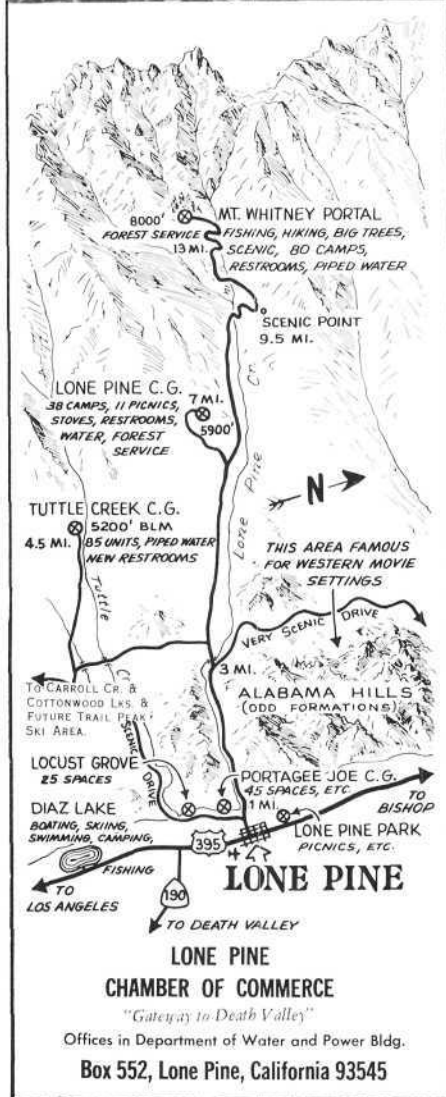


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Keeler, California



*Remains of Owens Lake Silver Lead furnace is a few steps off the highway just north of Keeler. Built in 1869 it closed down in 1874.*

A few of the tram towers can be seen high on the mountain side indicating the route traveled. Though the salt on the floor of Saline Valley was considered purer than any other known source the operation was too costly to continue.

From this point the road passes through a dolomite mining area evidenced by the dark, gaping mine holes above snow white dumps. Shortly after crossing the now dry Owens River the road joins U.S. 395 two miles south of Lone Pine.

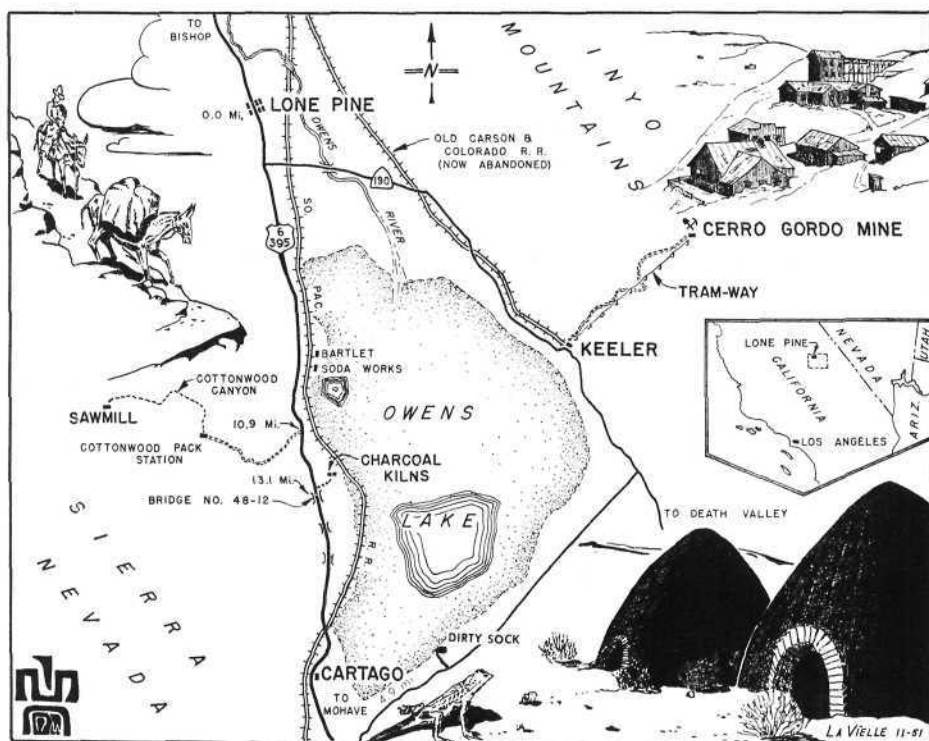
To continue the trip around Owens Lake turn south on 395 and follow the route covered by Captain Joe Walker, first known white man to travel the valley. He passed this way in 1834, when Owens Lake was a great body of water; wild game was plentiful and Indians freely moved to the warm valley in winter and up into the cool Sierras for summer.

In approximately ten miles a road sign indicates the route to the Cottonwood charcoal kilns. During the silver mining days the mountain slopes to the west were stripped of pinon pine to furnish fuel for steam engines, heat for living quarters and provide charcoal for the smelters. Years of sun and wind have carved the kiln walls leaving interesting



patterns, but sealing the fate of the historic structures.

The highway passes Bartlett near where the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, until recent months, was actively refining chemicals from the brine of Owens Lake. The plant is closed, and discarded tanks, floats and other lake equipment clutter the shoreline adding to the sad story of the decline of activity on and around the lake.





More interesting than the sight of the chemical plant's discards is the small town of Cartago. Like many one-time busy communities along the valley route, Cartago's population and income depended on the mines. When the Cerro Gordo mines shut down in 1879 the entire area was affected. Once the unloading port for the steamship Bessie Brady and later the Molly Stevens, Cartago today shows no signs that silver bars were once stacked everywhere.

Little remains to tell of the silver, the miners or the steamships and the little settlement of about 50 persons can easily be missed by the speeding traveler. Out of sight of the highway, toward the lake's edge, is the barracks, a part-brick building containing a vault and piles of white material, all dating back to World War I when a chemical company mined the lake for soda derivatives.

Two miles south is Olancho, the start-point for the trip around Owens Lake. Olancho was an early-day mill site and a rest station for valley travelers, the freight drivers and their long teams. When the mining era passed the community became a popular place for outfitting pack trains before going into the High Sierras. Once the gateway to the silver country, Olancho today is the gateway to exploring the past and present of Owens Lake country.

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U.S. PATENT NO. 2879103

CANADIAN PATENT NO. 637-543



**L**ITTLE *Uma*, the fringed-toed lizard, dwells in a world of blowing and swirling sands so grim even the hardiest of desert shrubs are poor and stunted. A desolate homeland, changing and shifting with every whim of the wind, it is a harsh land with little to offer to sustain life. Yet, so thoroughly at home is this little lizard in the windblown sands of the great southwest deserts, he is never found elsewhere.

What to him that the loose sand shifts and slides underfoot? The fringe of scales on his hind toes widen their supporting surfaces, and carry him skimming lightly over the top. Running at full speed, fore limbs off the ground, tail held high, he can make up to 25 mph., leaving only puffs of dust in his wake.

What to him if there are no rodent burrows handy to duck into when pursued? Any old spot is okay for the quick disappearance act of a sand digger such as he: a quick dive-in, some expert kicks with his hind feet, a final tail wiggle, and he's hidden.

Scientists have long been interested in this little guy who lives with ease in such a tough environment, and who is so hard to catch since he practically always sees or hears enemies coming in plenty of time to dash over a dune edge or, with what looks like a mighty impudent wave of the tail, disappear into the sand before their very eyes. And they know all this cannot be without some extra good body equipment, and a long-time know how.

Indeed this is so, for *Uma* belongs to an ancient tribe of sand lizards whose members lived in beds of intermittent streams about 10 million years ago, *Uma's* particular kind gradually becoming highly specialized for life on loose sands.

Number one requirement for such existence is quick digging skill. Zoologist Stebbins found that not only does this lizard have a shovel-shaped snout for the opening spade work, but its especially streamlined body is covered with small granular scales which make it smooth and resistance free. The hind toe scales that serve as shoes on the surface sand now can be raised to provide greater push area for that kick driving him forward in burying himself.

Other below surface problems are solved by further neat arrangements: a countersunk jaw, for instance, keeps sand

from being forced into the lizard's mouth. Large scales, properly placed, serve as flaps closing down and protecting his ears. There are shut-off valves in his nostrils which can be closed entirely or just enough to keep the particular size sand particles from getting up them. Fringes of scales on both eyelids protect his eyes. Any sand that does get in is pushed out the inner corner by a membrane that slides across the eyeball.

Interestingly enough, the lizard holds its front legs close to its body when digging itself in with alternate kicks of the hind legs. This stunt, it took Herpetologist Pough to show anatomically, provides a sand-free pocket of air under each arm and forward under the chest for the lizard to breathe while down below.

Pough's latest study of the little fringed-toes just reported in scientific literature was done in an area east of Palm Springs,

California, where strong northwesterly winds pick up sand from Whitewater Wash to the north and deposit it further south and east. Involving both field and laboratory work, the study throws a lot of new light on *Uma's* desert survival techniques.

He found that these lizards must constantly make adjustments in time spent above surface, and time buried under the sand in order to cope with the blasting heat of their surroundings. What makes it very hard is that there aren't holes around deep enough for them to use to escape the sun's heat. In much of *Uma's* range ground squirrels, kangaroo rats and the like who normally provide fine underground retreats for free-loading lizards, are not there because the sand is so loose they can't keep their burrows from collapsing. Further, the lizards themselves are small and subject to

# Desert Dune Dancer

by K. L. Boynton

© 1970



heavy pressure from the sand if they bury too deeply, and so normally go down only some 1.25 to 1.5 inches.

*Uma's* day begins shortly before or just after sunrise, with a warmup, each lizard orienting himself towards the rising sun and soaking up the early warmth. When his body temperature has come up to his activity level, foraging begins, the lizard running forward two or three inches and digging for insects or picking them off low vegetation. Even youngsters of the same species, not quick enough to dodge their elders, go down the hatch.

As the morning wears on, there is a decline in activity until by ten o'clock not a lizard is in sight. At this time their body temperature has reached an uncomfortable 100 and they have buried themselves, thereby gaining temporary relief. They may even move along hori-

zontally through the sand trying to find cooler spots, but do not dig deeper. At last when the hot sand about them raises their temperature dangerously near the 113 degree mark, they must come out onto the surface. Tail held high, they rush over the sand to the shade of a small dune or stunted creosote or *Dalea* shrub.

As the day ends, they must bury themselves to survive the night chill. Fussy about their selection of night retreats, they seemingly are influenced by the size of the sand grains, avoiding both the coarse spots and those with the very finest sand. Most lizards prefer depths from three-quarters to one and a half inches down under *Dalea* shrubs, investigation of which showed that they know what they are about for there the temperature is comfortable, the parts of the shrub above ground fending off the

worst of the night's cold, while the roots and branches and leaves, half covered with blow sand, provide lots of air pockets. There is also greater safety from predators, too, it being hard, for instance, for a coyote to locate a lizard tucked under the sand in all that tangle.

Is there a fine brotherly sharing of choice *Dalea* shrub night spots? Nope. *Uma*, it seems, is highly adverse to crowding, and since nearly all the lizards bury for the night in a twenty minute interval some half hour before sunset, there is considerable scurrying around to get located before the other fellow. Any attempt of a late-to-bedder to muscle in is repelled with vigor.

Herpetologist Carpenter, long interested in lizard behavior, collected a batch of fringe-toes and installed them in an enclosure where he could watch what went on. The lizards promptly made themselves at home, putting in a normal day, which, when they were above ground, consisted of four major occupations: feeding, sitting in the sun or shade, annoying each other, and in the case of the males, chasing the girls.

In addition to head-nodding customary when greeting a lady, gentlemen *Uma* also wave their front legs and feet as they advance: first one leg and foot and then the other at the rate of some ten times a second. This cheery greeting, synchronized with head-nodding, tips the lizard from side to side as he moves forward in a kind of dancing approach—a spectacle of considerable fascination to the lady apparently.

The normal clutch size is only three eggs, which shows that under usual circumstances a good percentage of individuals must make it to adulthood to keep the species going. It is also good proof that *Uma* and his kind have indeed refined the old basic adaptations of the ancient sand lizards to the point where they can successfully exploit exceedingly barren areas. Not the least of their valuable adjustments to their sandy life is their background-matching ability, for crouched motionless on the sand they are almost impossible to see. Loss by predation is thus cut to a minimum and what with a little bit of luck in good winter rainfall, these fleet-footed, independent little lizards are bound to be around and flourishing for many and many a day. □





# Gold at The Summit

by Mary Frances Strong

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As announced last month, Mary Frances Strong, well-known back country travel explorer and author of *Desert Gem Trails* has joined the staff of *Desert Magazine* as Field Trip Editor. This is the first of her articles which will appear every month.

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THE LURE of gold has challenged man since he raised up on his haunches and began to use his brain for thinking and scheming. As civilization progressed, gold became the most coveted of all possessions. It was the incentive for the great voyages across the unknown seas. The subsequent discoveries of new continents led to the development of vast frontiers as the result of the search for the golden treasure.

Gold fever is latent in the hearts of men today, but the news of a new gold strike will start their pulses racing. Gold is symbolic of the wealth and power most men desire.

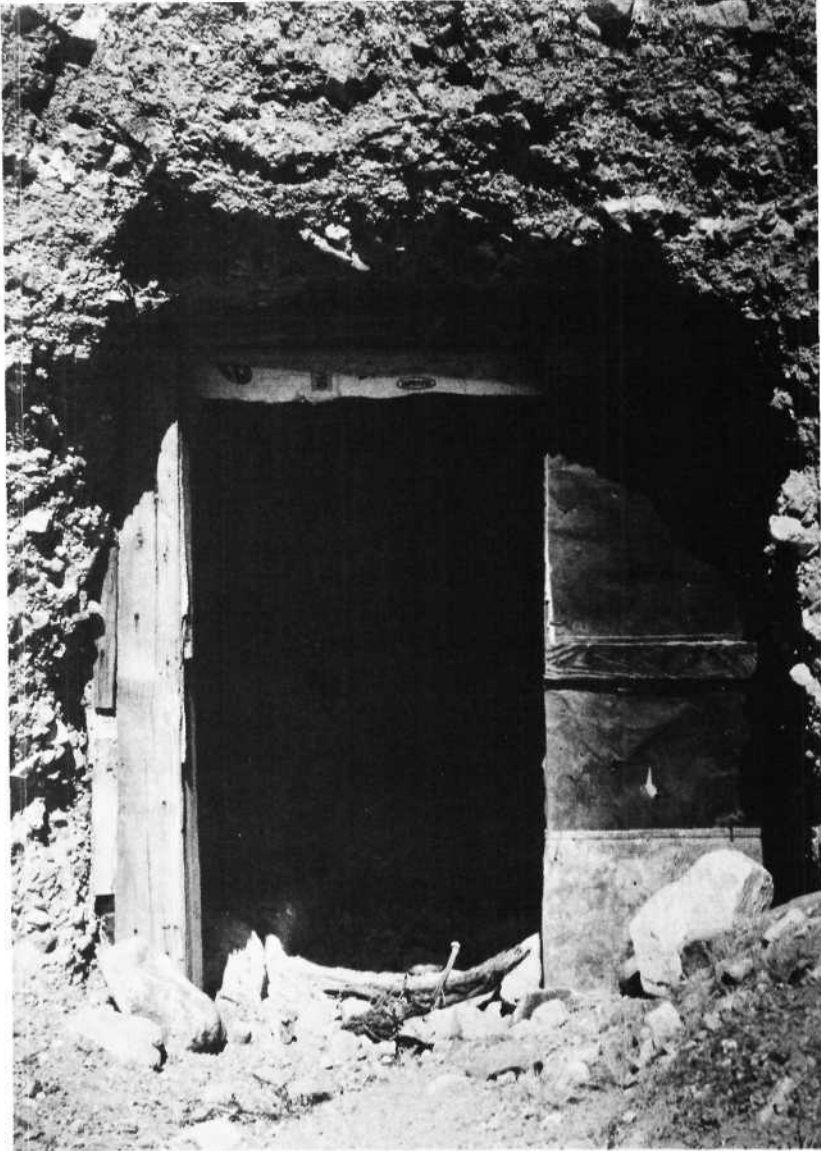
In recent years, a new breed of gold seekers has evolved — the weekend or hobby prospector. Tied to his work-day world in the teeming ant hills of metropolitan areas, he heads for the mountains or desert on weekends in search of fresh air, quiet solace and the possibility of finding gold. The fever is still there though the hardships are gone.





*Left: Water from this old well at Goler was piped six miles in an attempt to wet-wash the gravel. The project failed. Right: Although not exactly a modern apartment, this type of living quarters did have the advantage of being warm in winter and cool in summer—and it was rent-free. Below: A tin shack marks the location of one of the largest placer claims in the Summit. This area is honey-combed with adits in the gravel.*

**Photos by Jerry Strong**



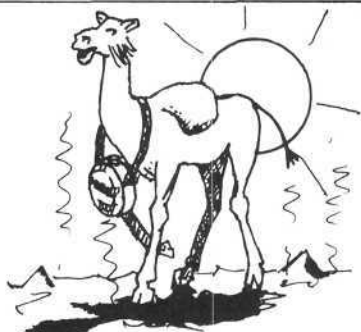
The weekend prospector loads his modern covered wagon with grub; stows aboard metal detector, dry-washer, shovels, pick and a vial to hold his colors. His family climbs aboard and they are off to one of the old diggings where miners once "struck it rich." If he is lucky, and often he is, he will bring home a few fines and occasionally a small nugget to show for his weekend adventure. This is enough to feed the fever. Plans for the next trip are usually made as he heads toward home.

California's Great Mojave Desert has many placer grounds where the hobbyist may try his luck. One of these is the Summit Dry Diggings, six miles northeast of Randsburg. The old placers are not exceptionally rich but a weekend of dry-washing should produce some results. There is still a number of private claims in the area—generally posted—but there is also plenty of open ground to work.

The diggings are located on the south-

*Continued*  
19





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D-3

ern edges of the Summit Range. This is a low series of east-west trending hills whose highest peaks rise only 700 to 1000 feet above the valley floor. The range is dissected by several large, canyon-like dry gulches and a myriad of small ones. The drainage channels of the region appear to have changed very little since Tertiary Time with the gold being found in the widespread Quaternary gravels.

Tremendous beds of gravel have been redistributed and average two to eighteen feet in thickness. They contain assorted material with many large boulders and show bedding and cross-bedding. The gravels are compact though very lightly cemented. The gold will be found most abundant at or near the base of the gravels, fairly close to bedrock. When looking for a likely spot to dry-wash, keep in mind the best concentrations will occur where there has been the greatest erosion.

A portable dry-washer will be needed and a man handy with tools can easily build his own at moderate cost. Plans

are available from several sources. Some small, very good dry-washers are also on the market.

Early day, portable dry-washers were a simple, rather primitive, home-made machine which substituted air for water in the recovery of gold. The size varied but they all consisted of hopper, riffle box and bellows.

The hopper or feed box, at the head of the riffle box usually had a heavy screen or pierced metal bottom. The bottom of the riffle box was generally made from heavy muslin which allowed the air from the bellows to penetrate easily and keep the gravels agitated. The bellows were made from heavy canvas and activated by means of a belt-driven crankshaft powered by a hand-operated wheel on the side of the dry-washer.

Mining methods have remained the same, though dry-washers have been sophisticated and are usually driven by a small gasoline engine. Gravel is first shoveled through a heavy screen to eliminate the larger pebbles or rocks. The



Near the center of the Summit Diggins, this old fireplace is all that remains.

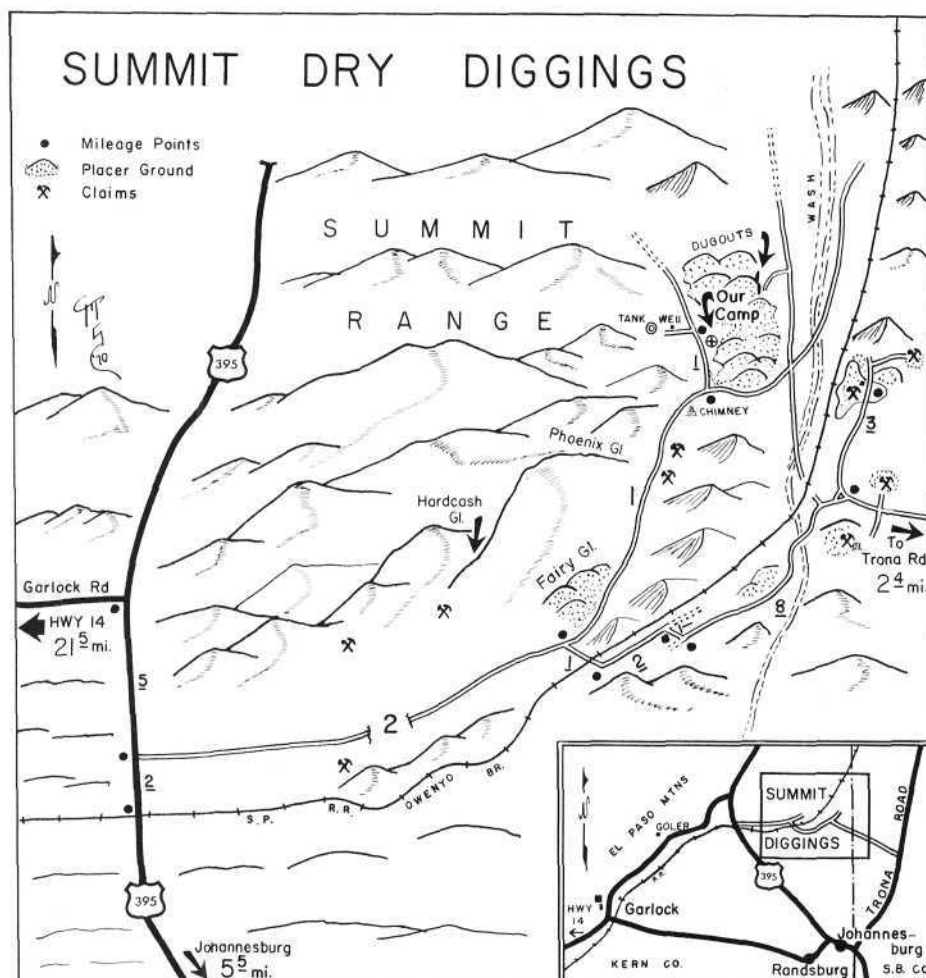
screened material is then allowed to lay out in the sun for at least a day. Even freshly dug desert gravels will always contain slight amounts of moisture which will interfere with proper dry-washing. The gravel must be thoroughly dry!

The Summit Diggings is an interesting desert locale to visit. They lie in an extremely arid region which can be blistering hot in summer; while, in the mid-winter months, icy winds may roar across the land with gale-like force.

In rare years, when several winter and spring storms manage to drop adequate moisture—there will be gardens of wild flowers in bloom. The main flora is a sparse covering of creosote bushes which are small and stunted from lack of adequate moisture.

Dozens of prospect holes dot the slopes and a few head frames gallantly rise skyward, having withstood time and the elements. A number of old dugouts remain in good condition—a fine testimonial to the aridity of the region.

The Summit Placer Diggings were discovered in the winter of 1892-93 when hundreds of prospectors from the north-



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Our congratulations go to Doyle Williams, Rt. 1, Box 67, Okemah, Okla., who was last year's champion at the Prospectors Club Meet. This year, he **EARNED FIRST PLACE AT BOTH THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEET AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROSPECTORS CLUB MEET.** To see Doyle work with his detector is a joy. Previously, Doyle had used other brands of detectors. His choice of instruments this year was one of our **NEW BREED OF HUNTER DETECTORS.**



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King Winch on Chevrolet Blazer

ern gold fields of California and Nevada began moving south to search the desert area east of the Tehachapi Mountains. During the '60s, placer gold had been found at Red Rock Canyon in the El Paso Mountains. Surely, the prospectors reasoned, there was more gold in "them thar hills"—and there was!

Coarse Gold Gulch in Goler Canyon was the first strike followed by others in Bonanza and Last Chance Gulches. The placers were rich with many fine nuggets being found. Hopes for these new camps were high. However, once again it was the old story—the diggings didn't hold up and the camps were crowded with prospectors unable to locate claims. Many of them left the camps and fanned out over the eastern hills in search of new deposits. The next camp to take shape was the Summit Diggings.

The Summit differed from its sister camps of Goler, Bonanza and Last Chance in that its placers were only moderately rich. It was a "poor man's camp" where a fellow down on his luck could eke out bacon and beans; or, with back-breaking labor obtain enough gold to get a grub



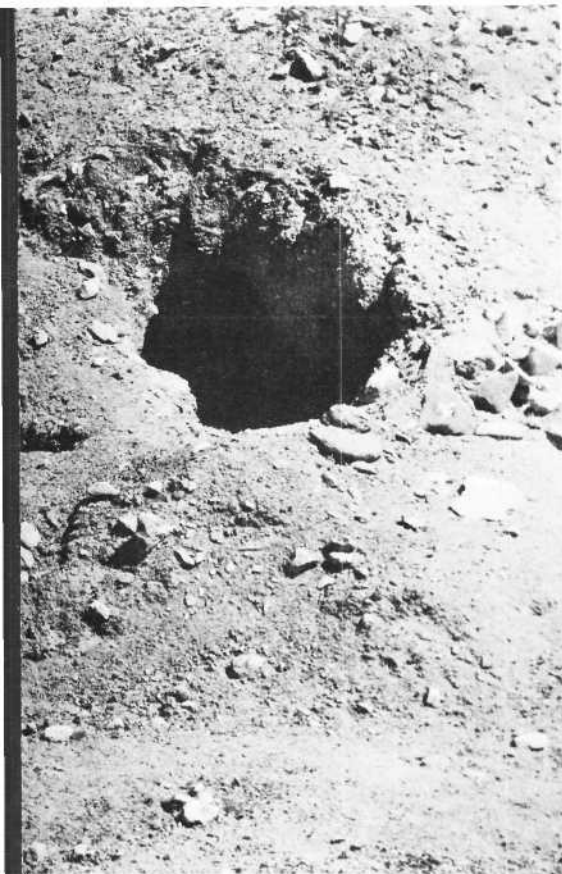
stake and move on to the next strike. It was never a large camp with the population less than one hundred at any one time.

Conditions were hard at the Summit. It was a haphazard camp of tents and primitive dugouts. The enterprising shopkeepers of the time didn't feel it was even worthy of one store. Supplies had to be hauled in on wagons from the other camps resulting in sky-high prices on all items.

They were a disgruntled and unhappy lot of prospectors. After long days of hard work there wasn't even that essential — a saloon — where a man could drown his troubles and be consoled by a "gay lady." Understandably, they moved out at the first opportunity.

The reports on the values in the Summit gravels vary considerably—from 35¢ to 35 dollars per cubic yard. A conservative average would be between \$1.20 and \$1.40 per cubic yard.

Probably the richest placer claim was the Oro Fino, which was worked intermittently for 30 years. Reportedly, this deposit yielded an average value in excess of \$2.00 per cubic yard. In addition, the gravel contained a small amount of flake platinum and silver (cerargyrite) amounting to 60¢ per cubic yard. The gold was chiefly coarse, with individual pieces having a value of 1/4¢ up.



*Along the Summit Road two miles east of U.S. 395 is a large deposit of gravel. Although considerable dry-washing has been done, there is still ground to work. Respect private claims.*

the high cost of obtaining the water. In spite of all the many sophisticated plans to exploit the placers, the most gold was recovered by a small dry-washer.

Summit Diggings are a made-to-order locale for the weekend prospector. There are numerous gravels to work and plenty of open desert for camping. Better bring along wood if you enjoy an evening campfire. Wood is as scarce as water.

The diggings are divided into two sections by the Kern-San Bernardino County line and the Mojave-Lone Pine Branch of the Southern Pacific Railroad. There appears to be only one road crossing the tracks. It is shown on the accompanying map. Good dirt roads lead into the area. They are okay for all cars, campers and vacation-size trailers. The best time of the year to visit this region of the Great Mojave Desert is from late September to May.

Our most enjoyable trip was in April when we spent several days exploring the

area. We made base camp at the foot of a huge deposit of gravel. There had been considerable mining here, but still tons of material remained untouched. After parking the trailer, we fired up our trail bikes, loaded cameras aboard, then covered a good many miles on the network of roads throughout the Summit Range. There was considerable evidence of the early day prospectors — primitive dugouts where men had lived with the barest of essentials, as well as some which were quite elaborate with metal doors, screens, cupboards and stoves. A few shacks remain, but they appear to be of a later vintage. Near our camp was a fine stone fireplace — all that remains of what was possibly a proper house.

There were pieces of old glass—many of them a deep purple—along with the necks of blob-top whiskeys and beers. Evidently it wasn't a dry camp! Old pots and pans, dishes and other miscellaneous items from an era of long ago were scattered about near the dugouts.

We crossed the railroad and explored the many prospects and old dumps—the latter in hope of finding an old bottle

*Continued on page 50*

In the fall of 1923, the Oro Fino Mining Company installed a Stebbens Dry Concentrator. The gravel was mined by a tractor, sub-soiler and scraper, then dumped on a grizzly. The undersize was broken and passed through a trommel. The undersized from this, after having the dust removed in an airblast, was passed over shaking tables. Tailings were placed to one side by a stacker. The entire plant was portable, being mounted on rails, weighed 11 tons and had a capacity of 150 yards of gravel per shift. This plant operated during the fall of 1923 and approximately 800 cubic yards of material were treated. It is stated that recovery was from 94% to 96% based on fire assays. Much of the gold was coarse with nuggets up to \$4.25 in value being obtained. Operations had ceased by January 1924 and no record of the total values uncovered is available.

Other mining companies also had plans to use large machines at the Summit Diggings. However, there seems to have been a failure in the air separation process when applied to anything larger than hand scale. The large machines couldn't properly process the general run of des-ert material.

An attempt was made to wet wash the gravels by pumping water over a six-mile route from a well at Goler. This, too, failed. No doubt, due in great part, to

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# CLOISTERED CHLORIDE

by Betty J. Tucker

THE MAIN roads and campgrounds of Death Valley were filled with sun seekers and desert lovers, so we decided to take to the higher roads for a bit of solitude and a chance to listen to the desert.

Two miles south of Daylight Pass on the California-Nevada border we turned on a well maintained gravel road. It rolled across the desert in a series of dips and dives, all the while climbing upward into the Funeral Mountains. The air was clean and warm. Little brown shouldered lizards would zip across the road and pause, showing the reddish underside of their looks as they looked to see who the intruders were. We saw Nevada red-winged blackbirds and several finches



and sparrows flitting about the sagebrush.

We turned a fairly sharp curve and down in a small valley we saw the remains of Chloride City. It had boomed twice. First from 1878 to 1883 and once during Rhyolite's heyday from 1905 to 1910. This was an active place but the cost of pumping water up 3500 feet from the Keane Spring was prohibitive and they finally had to give it up as a lost cause.

This little town is a great place to visit. The personality of the long-gone miners still lingers. There are three fairly large ramshackle buildings still showing signs of their ways of life. One building has reached the stage of almost total collapse.

The end wall has fallen out and the side wall gave way without the support. However, one of its rooms and what appears to have been a summer kitchen or pantry, still stands.

I crawled through the downed timbers and found a white enameled, long legged "Perfection No. 2" kerosene stove on its side. The walls still remaining had been insulated with cardboard cartons that had once contained Borden's milk and Wilson's Condensed Vegetable Soup. The other old buildings, in fairly good shape and obviously recently inhabited by a desert wanderer, had a stove made out of an old rusty oil can. The lower front was cut out as a door and a chimney had been inserted at the top. Behind this building was the worn out old body of a car.

Up the hill a short way there is a one-room house dug out of the side of the hill. From the outside only the wooden door and the stovepipe sticking above ground announce the presence of a home. The entry way is about two and a half feet wide and covered with dirt and rock.

The ceiling has been braced securely with timbers and the entire back wall is of quartz. There are a couple more houses made this way. They were called "Cousin Jacks," after the Welsh miners who brought this method of house building from the old country. They most certainly had many advantages. They would be much cooler during the hot summer months and warmer in the winter as the driving wind couldn't penetrate the dirt and rock walls.

The ground around Chloride City is covered with pieces of mica which glitter like ice in the sun. Looking out through the divide we had a spectacular view of the desert far below. The plants were all of yellow, grey and bronze hues. The sky was a sharp crystal blue. The wind blew ever so gently and the birds flew past, their wings making soft fluttering sounds. We sat quietly, trying not to breathe so we could hear the silence.

Before leaving we drove on another mile and hiked up the steep thousand feet to Chloride Cliff. This overlooks the Keane Wonder Mine and gives a panoramic view of Death Valley. Maybe Chloride City will boom again. I hope not as its ghosts are still making themselves felt and it would be a shame to push them out. □

## Death Valley '49ers National Encampment Program

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

- 7:30 p.m.—CAMPFIRE, Stove Pipe Wells Village. Community singing and talks about old-timers, followed by dancing.
- 8:30 p.m.—NATURALIST TALK, Museum and Visitors' Center, Furnace Creek Ranch.

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

- 6:00 a.m. — SAND DUNES PHOTO SHOOT. Sand Dunes Campground. Photography with props and models. Bring camera and plenty of film.
- 8:00 a.m.—HISTORICAL BREAKFAST, Stove Pipe Wells Village. Horace M. Albright is principal speaker. Price, \$1.75.
- 8:00 a.m.—HOOTENANNY BREAKFAST, Furnace Creek Golf Course. Hootenanny Hoedown. Price, \$1.75.
- 10:30 a.m. — HISTORICAL MONUMENT DEDICATION, Highway 190 just west of Stovepipe Wells Village. The old Eichbaum Toll Road to be dedicated with an appropriate monument. Mrs. Willard Lewis, principal speaker.
- 10:30 a.m.—CONDUCTED TOUR, starting at Visitors' Center, to Ubehebe Crater, Scotty's Castle and North End points. Use your vehicle.
- 1:30 p.m.—DEATH VALLEY TRAIL RIDERS arrive at Furnace Creek Ranch after 125-mile horseback ride.
- 7:30 p.m.—CAMPFIRE, Texas Springs. Community Sing led by Dick Hilleary. Historical talks.
- 8:30 p.m.—NATURALIST TALK, Museum and Visitors' Center, Furnace Creek Ranch.
- 9:00 p.m.—DANCING FOR EVERYONE, western and modern, Stove Pipe Wells Village. Also dancing at Furnace Creek Ranch.



*Desolation Canyon in Death Valley, the scene of the first Annual '49er Encampment back in 1949.*

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

- 8:00 a.m.—PHOTOGRAPHERS' BREAKFAST, Stove Pipe Wells Village. Ralph Welles, Ranger-Naturalist in Death Valley for 14 years will be featured speaker. Price, \$1.75.
- 8:00 a.m.—AUTHORS' BREAKFAST, Furnace Creek Golf Course. Present will be outstanding writers of the West. Featured speaker is desert writer, E. I. Edwards. Price, \$1.75.
- 10:00 a.m.—CONDUCTED TOUR starting at Visitors' Center through center of Valley and ending at Stove Pipe Wells in time for chuck wagon.
- 12:00 Noon—CHUCK WAGON LUNCH, Stove Pipe Wells Village, Western style chuck wagon chow. Price, \$1.75.
- 2:00 p.m.—BURRO FLAPJACK SWEEPSTAKES, Stove Pipe Wells Village. A hilarious race of old prospectors and their burrows who must walk around the arena, cook a flapjack and then feed it to the burro. Action is right in front of spectators.
- 7:30 p.m.—EVENING ASSEMBLY, Furnace Creek Ranch. Color slide show by Ralph Welles.

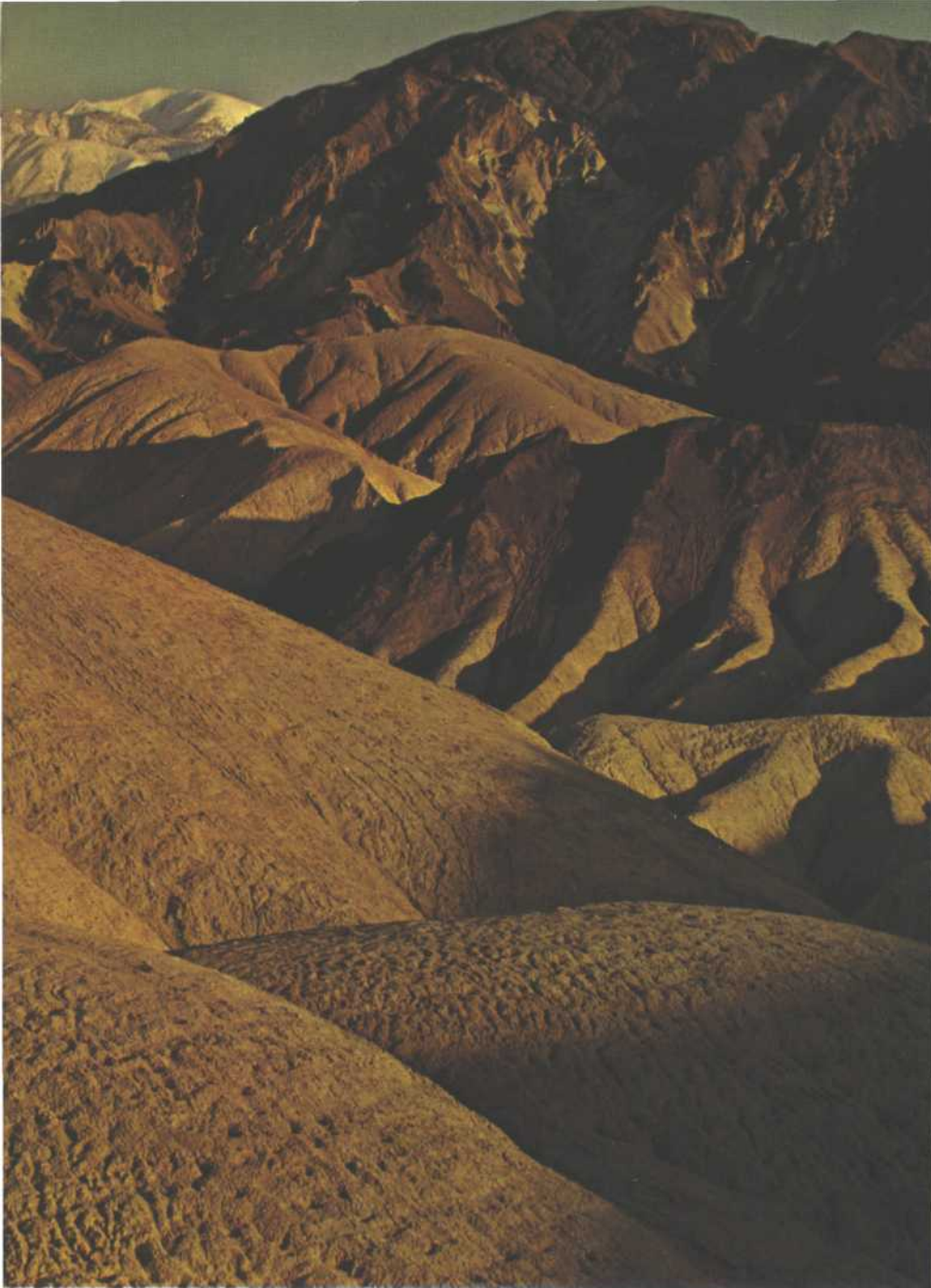
- 8:45 p.m.—OLD - FASHIONED FIDDLERS' CONTEST, same location as above. Best fiddlers in the West compete.
- 8:30 p.m.—NATURALIST TALK, Visitors' Center, Furnace Creek Ranch.
- 9:00 p.m.—DANCING FOR EVERYONE, Stove Pipe Wells Village and Furnace Creek Ranch.

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- 7:00 a.m.—PROTESTANT SUNRISE SERVICE, Desolation Canyon.
- 7:30 a.m.—CATHOLIC MASS, Visitors' Center, Furnace Creek Ranch.
- 8:30 a.m.—ARTISTS' BREAKFAST, Furnace Creek Golf Course. Top-flight Western artists work on a new western scene plus display of their works. Sale of paintings. Price, \$1.75.
- 10:30 a.m.—CONDUCTED TOUR, starting at Visitors' Center and going to south section of the Valley.
- 7:30 p.m.—NATURALIST TALK, Visitors' Center, Furnace Creek Ranch.



# The



*Sunrise, Golden Canyon from Zabriskie Point.*

by David Muench

During the past two years many of the covers of Desert Magazine have been photographs by David Muench of Santa Barbara, California. His dynamic photos have also appeared in national magazines and books about the West. David is not only an expert technician but has the rare ability to capture the moods of the area he is covering—such as this trilogy on Death Valley.



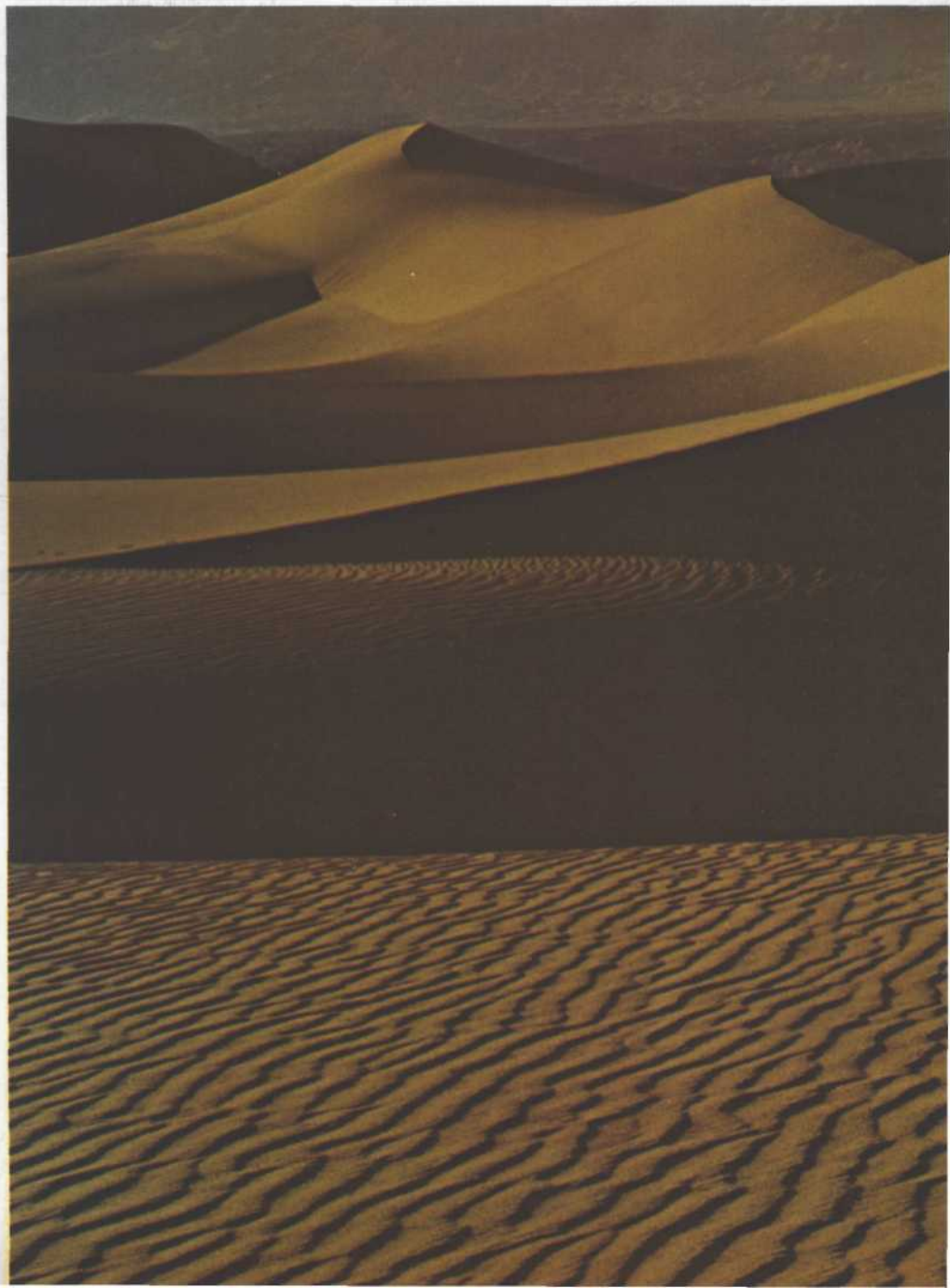


# Moods of Death Valley

by David Muench



*Amargosa River at dawn from Dante's View.*



*Designs in sand, Mesquite Flat dunes.*





# Death Valley Memories

by Helen Walker

**D**EATH VALLEY is two-faced and deceptive. At first glance you see the soft hues of her blue and purple mountains. Blends of burnt oranges and yellows compounded with the gray of the extruding fans dissolve into the gentle floor of the valley.

A closer inspection reveals a sharp contrast in her character. Bare mountains, wrinkled from abrasion and exposure, are bent from cataclysmic upheavals. Crevices are filled with deposits from ancient seas—the scars of time are clearly visible. White man's story was written in this backstage setting a mere 120 years ago.

After the trials of the ill-fated emigrant wagon trains, only the foolhardy would risk entry into the desolate sink. They trudged along beside their burros, twisting through the prickly brush, stumbling over rock, as they wandered the dry sandy washes. Their eyes sought the slightest sign of tell-tale color—gold and silver. A few of the more fortunate hit pay dirt—they returned with wagons laden with tools for mining and ma-

John Walker photo



Joseph Muench photo

terials for shelters. Trails widened into rutted tracks. Merchants followed the miners. Cities flourished overnight. Then, when color ran out, efforts crumbled to dust and splinters in the hot, dry sun. Today, ghostly memories linked together by hand-me-down tales, keep the '49ers spirit alive.

A silver strike on the west side of the

Panamint Range in 1873 was the beginning of the mining era. Coined from a phrase, "Pan a mint of it," Panamint City became the first of the boom towns. Its reputation for hell-raising and lawlessness was never equaled. It lured more than a thousand fortune seekers, who raised a town of wood, stone and brick structures. Assays were high as men dug

at the greenish-blue veins of copper-silver ore. Smoke belched from the tall brick chimney as the thump of the stamp mill beat a rhythm into the echoing hills.

The solitary approach to Panamint City was up a narrow rock-carved road through Surprise Canyon. Each bend of the road was a potential ambush point for outlaws who infiltrated the area.

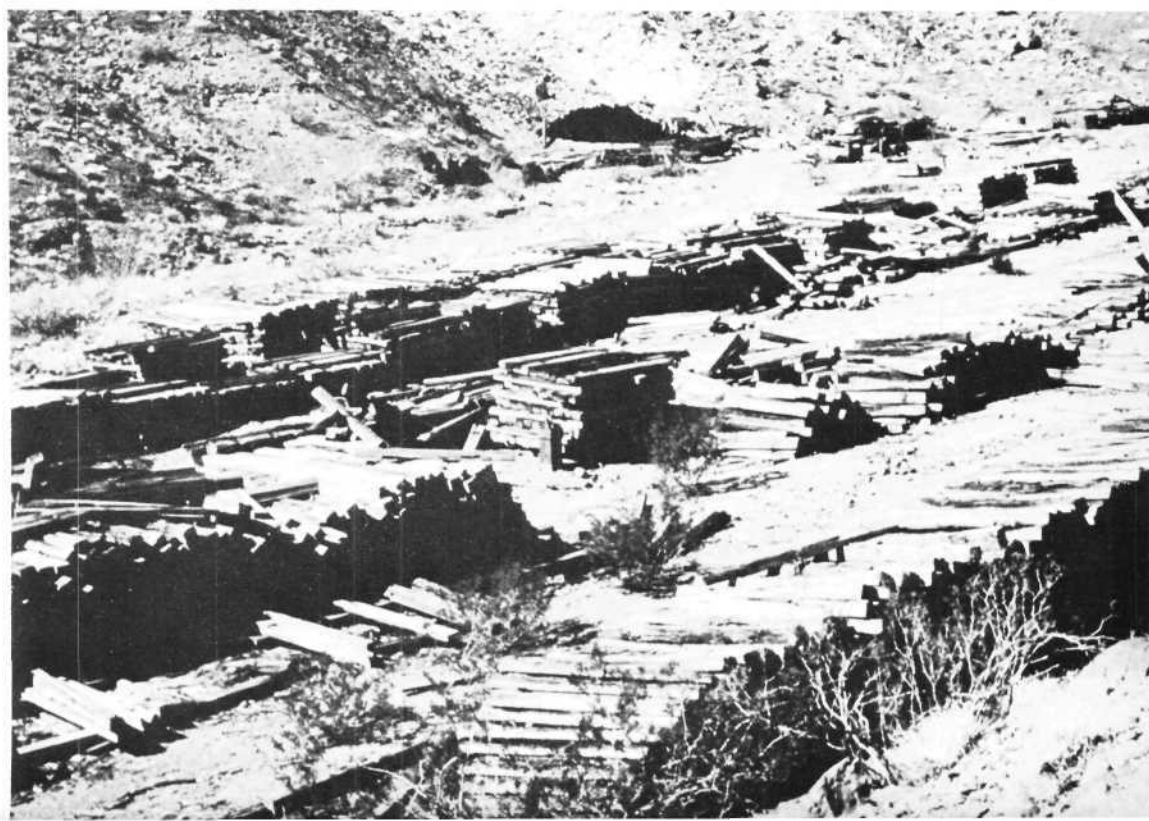
John Walker photo

*Above: Charcoal kilns in Wildrose Canyon.*

*Used in 1870s, they still stand. Opposite page: Panamint City—*

*the stamp mill chimney and a few old foundations are all that remain.*

*Right: Tie Canyon, showing ties purchased by Death Valley Scotty to heat his castle. Enough for many cold winters!*





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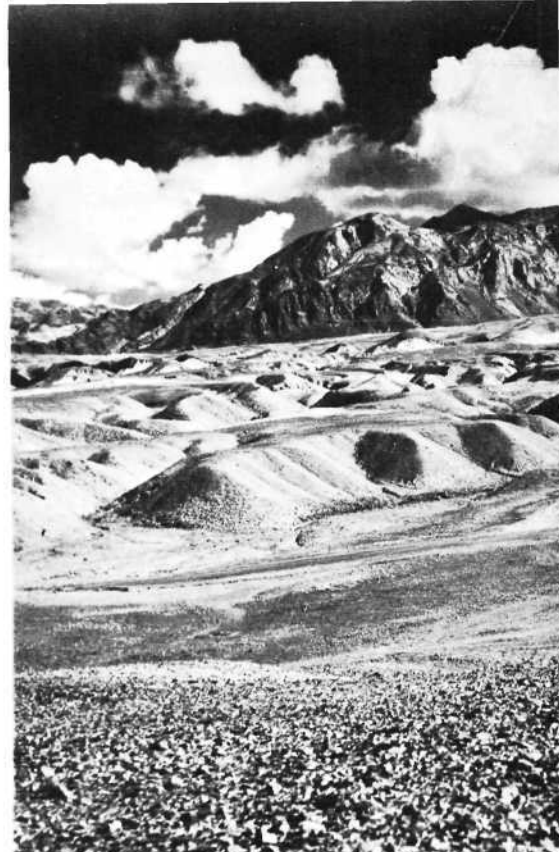
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Wells Fargo refused to carry the ore—the risk was too great. Mine owners solved the problem by melting the ore and casting it into balls weighing 500 pounds or more. With the balls loaded in the open wagons, they shipped the ore out in broad daylight.

Panamint City did not last long. Miners were reluctant to face the truth, but the limestone encasing the ore was more than time and cost could afford. Silence descended upon the city as its citizens departed, carrying only what they could handle in one wagon. A sudden flash flood washed through the narrow canyon, leaving only scattered rock and timber.

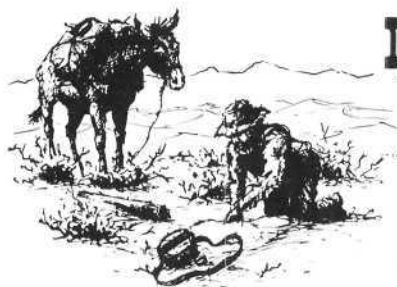
Ballarat, providing supplies and diversion to dusty-throated miners, opened its doors to welcome the new townspeople. Many stayed and built homes. They put in their time chipping away at the rock in Happy and Pleasant Canyons. Their take kept them in beans and bacon, but no major strike resulted.

The discovery of borax brought more prospectors to the valley in 1880. Aaron Winter, and his wife, Rosie, are credited with the find. While listening to a traveler tell of the material, Rosie remembered the sticky substance that got on their belongings. She led Aaron to the marsh near Furnace Creek where they collected some of the cotton balls for a test. Aaron used alcohol and acid, then touched it



with a flame. "She burns green," he shouted, "Rosie, we're rich."

Mining was not the problem with borax. Production of crystals was a relatively simple operation. Wooly materials containing the borates were mixed together with water and carbonate of soda, then heated in huge vats. During the cooling process, the crystals formed. However, transportation to the railroad at



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*Puffy white clouds add emphasis to the barrenness of Death Valley with its beat-scorched volcanic soil in foreground.*

idea was conceived ahead of its time, and there was not sufficient knowledge available to perfect it. Unfortunately it had to be aborted, before it could be given a fair chance to operate.

Gold had its heyday near the turn of the century. It was gold that originally brought the emigrants stumbling into the desolate sink, impatient to find a shortcut to the gold fields in Northern California. A shroud of mystery blanketed the valley in the wake of the '49ers, and the Indians had the area to themselves for the next two decades. Now and then an inquisitive prospector wandered in and a few returned with ore-bearing samples. Their stories nourished tales of nuggets the size of a fist, and giant ledges of ore-bearing rock. But none seemed able to do more than produce the samples—the sites were seldom found.

Gunsight was the first of the famous lost gold mines. It was told that one of the emigrants passing through the valley in 1849 pocketed a hunk of ore. He took the ore to a gunsmith in hopes of having it melted down for a new sight on his gun. The gunsmith declared the ore to be the purest silver he had ever worked. The prospector returned to stake a claim to the mine, and appropriately planned to call it "Gunsight." Years of wandering never located the site.

Another long sought-after lost mine was the Breyfogle. Jacob Breyfogle's horses ran off while on a prospecting trip in 1864. In his search for the animals, he left markers to assure his not getting lost. In placing one marker, he discovered a rich vein. Before he could return, his supplies had run out and he became ill. His life was saved by Indians who carried him back to their village. He later attempted to retrace his path, but wind and weather had destroyed his markers.

In spite of the adverse conditions, ore was eventually discovered at numerous locations. Settlements sprang up close to

*The Devil's Corn Field stretches for trackless miles, in the background can be seen the sand dunes near Stovepipe Wells.*



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the working mines, tent cities flourished. Harrisburg, in the Panamint range near Aguerberry Point was such a place. Pete Aguerberry and Shorty Harris found ore there.

Harrisburg was soon joined by the new town of Skidoo. Skidoo's population grew to nearly 1000. Water was a problem, and it became almost as precious as ore. A pipe line was laid which connected Skidoo with a spring on Telescope Peak, 23 miles away. Did the expression "Twenty Three Skidoo" come from the facts of the town and the pipe line or was Skidoo named after the expression, and the pipe line just incidental?

Death Valley Scotty, whose real name was Walter Scott, is almost as famous as Death Valley itself. It is difficult to separate the fact from the fiction in stories woven around him. At the north end of the valley stands the castle built by Scotty and his millionaire partner, Albert John-

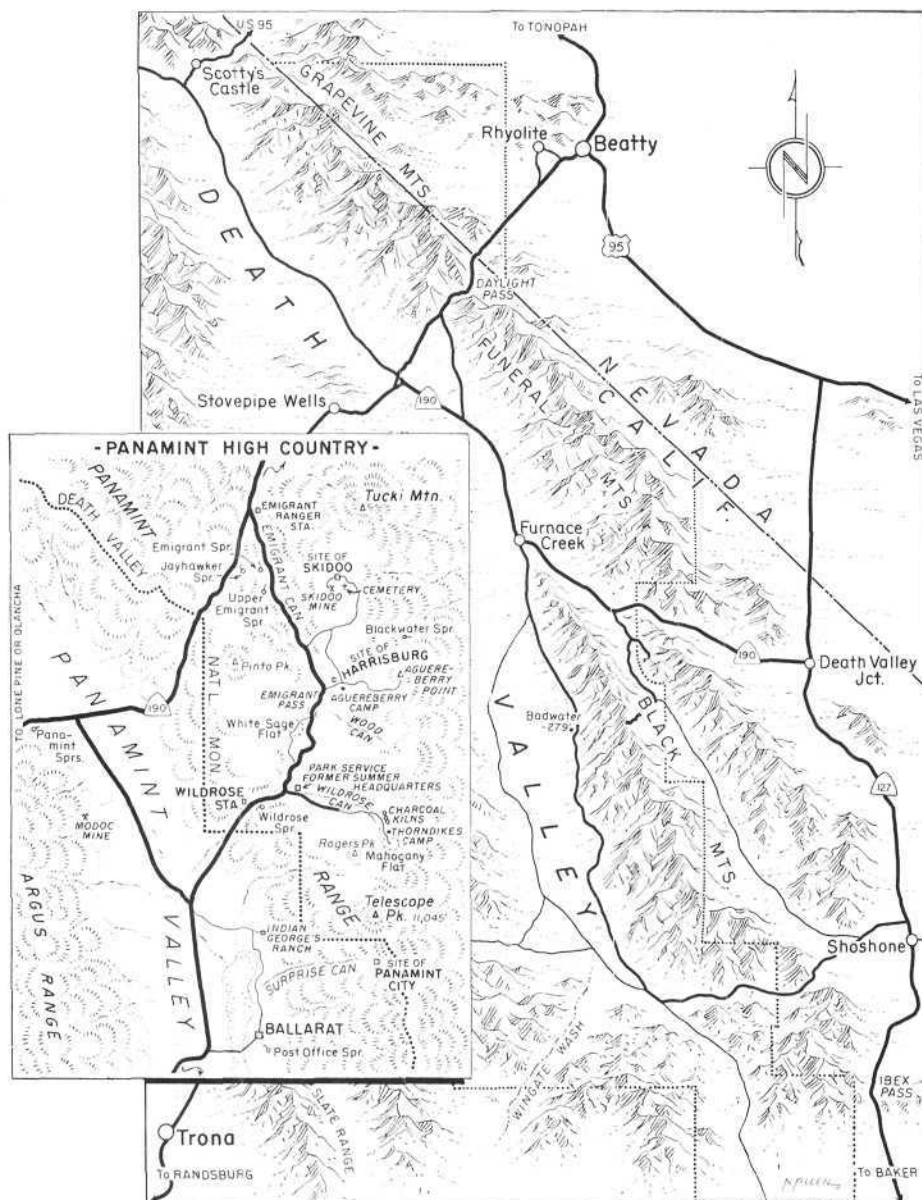
son. Construction on the castle began in 1924 in the face of tremendous odds. Scotty said he kept three crews, one coming in, one working, and the other leaving. No cost was spared in the building or furnishings, which are influenced by Spanish, Italian and Mexican-American. The water system was developed at the spring in Grapevine Canyon. It included a hydroelectric plant that supplied the castle, as well as the 185-foot swimming pool.

To heat the castle, Scotty bought all of the old ties from the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad for \$1500. However, to get them delivered and stacked in the canyon near the castle, he paid another \$25,000.

The carving over the door read "Death Valley Ranch." But to both Scotty and Johnson, it was always "Scotty's Castle." Death separated the two just six years apart.



*This area of crusted alkali is aptly named the Devil's Golf Course.*



The castle has been a favorite spot for visitors in the Valley. The National Park Service this summer bought the castle at an estimated cost of \$850,000 and will maintain and service the historical old ranch. The tours through the castle are still being offered as in the past.

Automobiles brought the first tourists to Death Valley. In spite of the roads being no more than rutted wagon trails, lack of fuel and water, tires that split and buried their burden, the motorist continued to come. One of the first hotels in the area was opened by Bob Eichbaum, at Stovepipe Wells. Eichbaum was also the instigator of the first improved road into the valley. It followed the route that the emigrants took on their way out—over Towne Pass, down to Darwin Wash, and finally on into Lone Pine. It was dedicated as "Eichbaums Tollroad." The toll was \$2.00 per car, plus 50 cents per person.

Today, there are highways into Death Valley from four directions. There are accommodations, services and information centers to make your visit a memorable one. Most of the points of interest are located a short drive off the main road, each marked with plaques, briefing you on the historical and geological facts. Some of the points of interest lie in the back country and are reached on side trips marked, Jeep Roads. They are less traveled, therefore it is advisable for only the more experienced travelers, and those with sturdy vehicles to attempt these trips. It is also suggested you check at headquarters on the current road conditions, as sudden floods often change the paths of streams and close entire areas.

The fear and mystery that once cloaked Death Valley are vanishing. Her scars you will see, her past you will understand, as you search for answers to this era of our California heritage. □

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# Ghosts of Gleeson

by Arnold Tilden



*Gleeson today.*

*A ghost gas station.*

AS YOU top the crest of the winding gravel road that has been following the hogbacks all the way from Tombstone, Arizona, a desolate cemetery on the left is the first indication of one of the many former mining towns which pockmark the deserts and hills of the southwest. The cemetery appears to be the last resting place of the inhabitants of a long-dead mining period.

However, stones indicating burial as late as 1968 and others in good condition are definite proof the living are still much interested in memories of the past.

While some stones mark the graves of persons born as early as 1848 and buried in 1924, one very new stone is the resting place of Yee Wee, birth date unknown, who was buried on February 20, 1968.

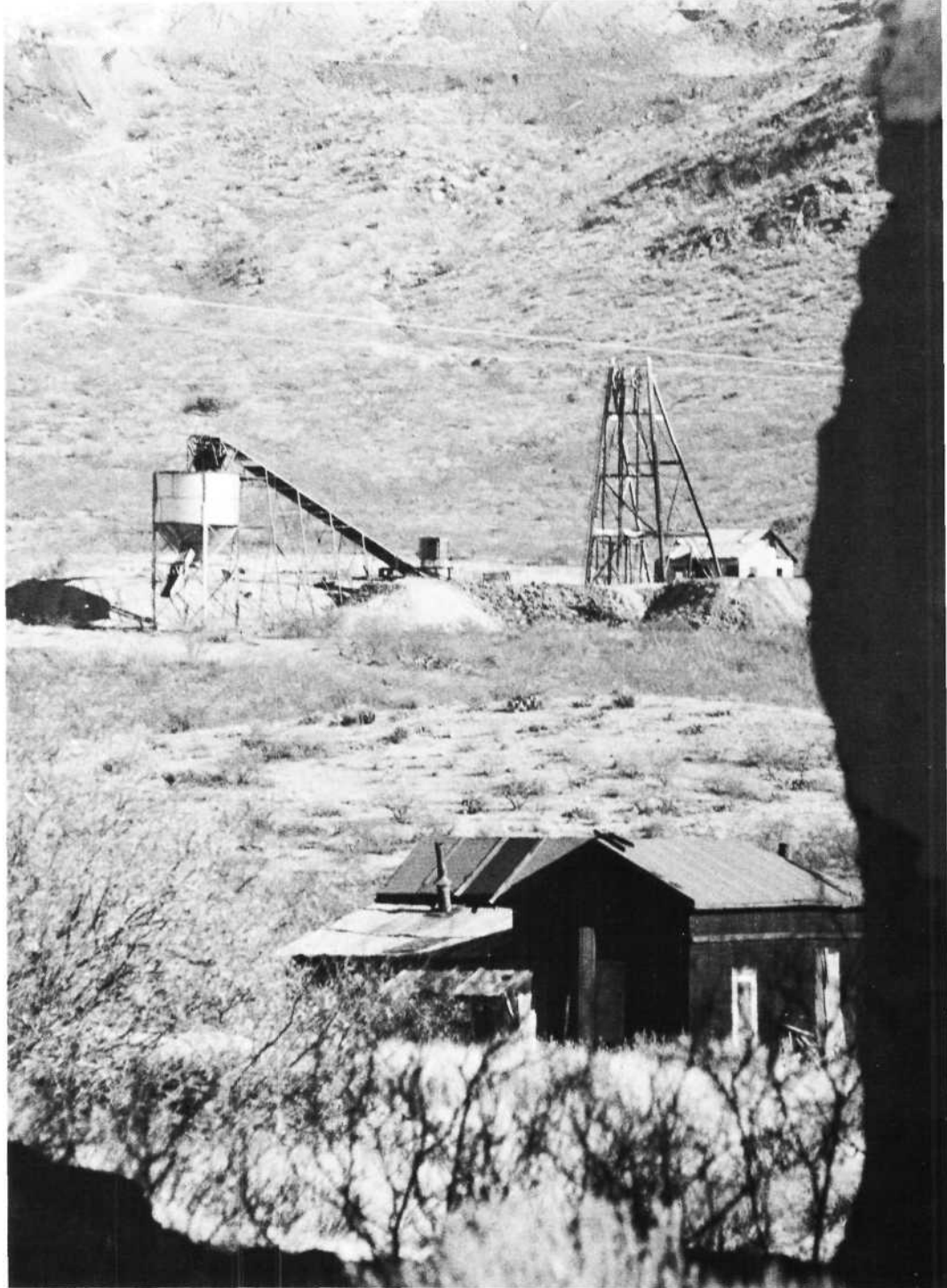
Who were these people and where did they live? What did they do and why were they buried in a little, almost deserted, rural cemetery, just two years ago? A return to the car and a coast to the bottom of the hill brings some information. There a sign reveals you are in the center of Gleeson, Arizona.

Gleeson might actually have been one of the oldest mining centers in Arizona. Just when mining was first begun in the area no one will ever know, but certainly by early Spanish times, and perhaps much earlier, since Indians were mining blue gemstones which played, and still play, such an important part in the jewelry and personal adornments of the Indians of the Southwest.

Richard van Valkenburgh, writing almost 25 years ago, tells of his investigation of the turquoise deposits and prehistoric Indian sites in this area (*Desert*,



*Scene of the last  
mining activity.*



February, 1947). The evidence which he found indicates both Hohokam and Mogollon utilization of the area on a large scale as early as the 13th Century. He also found indisputable evidence of continued use by the Apaches of the immediate mining area as well as larger sites in the nearby Dragoon Mountains. There is no doubt the Chiricahuas under Cochise used the area until his death in 1872, and that the tribe continued to control the area until its final surrender in 1886.

Three hundred miles to the north, Navajo tales, handed down from the period of the 1880s, indicate the Apaches permitted selected Navajos to

work the area without interference. There is even the supposition that the mountains might have contained the famed "lost mines" of the Zuni reported by the early Spanish chroniclers. Although early Indian utilization of the mines may still be shrouded in mystery or uncertainty, their exploitation by the white man is a matter of record.

By 1890 "Turquoise Mountain" was sufficiently enchanting to lure Tiffany and Company, of New York City, to purchase the available claims in the area and to engage in the first commercial exploitation of the old Indian gem fields. The town of Turquoise was born

and a post office was established in October, 1890, but within three years and eleven months activities ceased; the post office was closed, and the town returned to the deep sleep for which it is again noted.

The sleep on this occasion was not for long, for the town awakened six years later (October, 1900), and began an active mining career, lasting until the copper boom of the World War I era collapsed. Its real claim to fame began in 1909 when copper was found in quantity. Two railroads were built into the town to compete in transporting the



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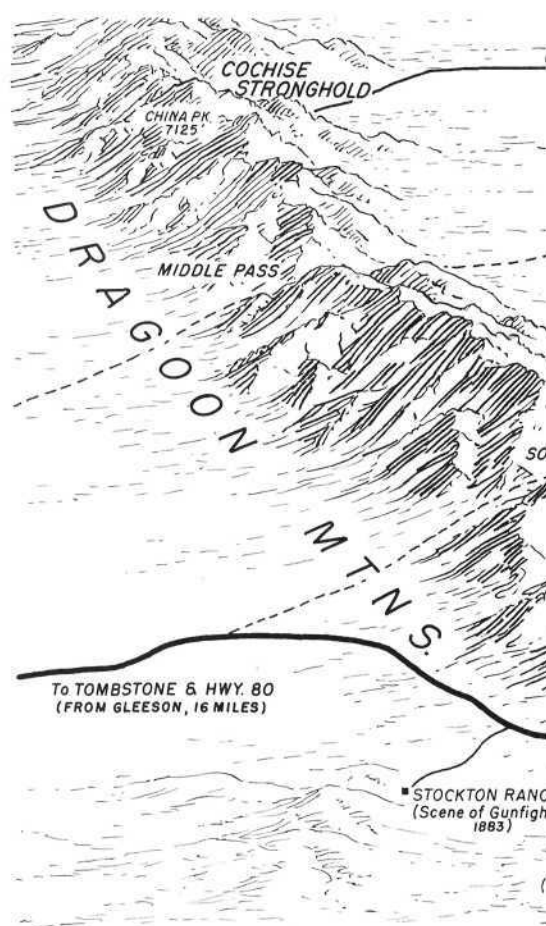
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ore 35 miles to the smelter in Douglas and a local newspaper, *The Arizonian*, bragged that "more ore has been mined at Gleeson, to the amount of development in the mines, than in any camp in the world."

Unfortunately for Gleeson and its kindred towns throughout the West, ore has the unfortunate habit of exhausting itself, becoming less and less plentiful until the cost of operation exceeds the income. So it was with Gleeson and its neighboring camps. Gleeson continued to eke out a meager existence as a nearby supply point for the local cattle ranches in the area and periodically would experience a boom when a movie company would select it as a location. Gradually returning to the soil, Gleeson still retained the loyalty of a few of its older and more beloved citizens, none perhaps more loyal than Yee Wee.

No one knows where or when Yee Wee was born nor when he arrived in the United States. Sometime before the end of the 19th Century he came to San Francisco and from there to Tombstone. There he worked for a relative, Quong Kee, who operated the famous Can-Can restaurant. About 1900 he came to Gleeson where he opened a restaurant that became famous throughout the territory for the excellence of the food and the reasonableness of the price. It is said that fifty cents was the cost of a Sunday dinner consisting of several courses ending with homemade ice cream or a delicious lemon pie.

Yee Wee was liked and admired by all. Although he seemingly never made any great amount of money, his business was an outstanding success until the mines closed in the early 'twenties. Loyal to his community, Yee Wee continued to operate his restaurant, now catering to



the occasional traveler, the prospector and the nearby cattlemen.

During the depression he found it more profitable to close his business and accept a position as cook at a nearby CCC camp. His deserted restaurant, in what was now an almost deserted town, was broken into by vandals who deliberately or accidentally set it on fire when they left. Yee did not rebuild, but he continued to stay in the little shack behind his ruined restaurant, living on his savings. He remained in Gleeson for an additional 35 years, supported by the affection of his few remaining friends.

One morning in February, 1968, Danny Christianson, neighbor and friend, dropped in for a visit to find the old man lying on the floor unable to rise. Rushed to a hospital in Douglas, he died on the following morning. His remaining friends, within a radius of 50 miles, arranged for his burial in the town he loved so much.

As the pioneers vacate the crumbling remnants of the once famous mining town, the modern "wanderers of the wastelands" take their place. Attracted by the brisk, clear air in which there is no hint of smog and by the wide open

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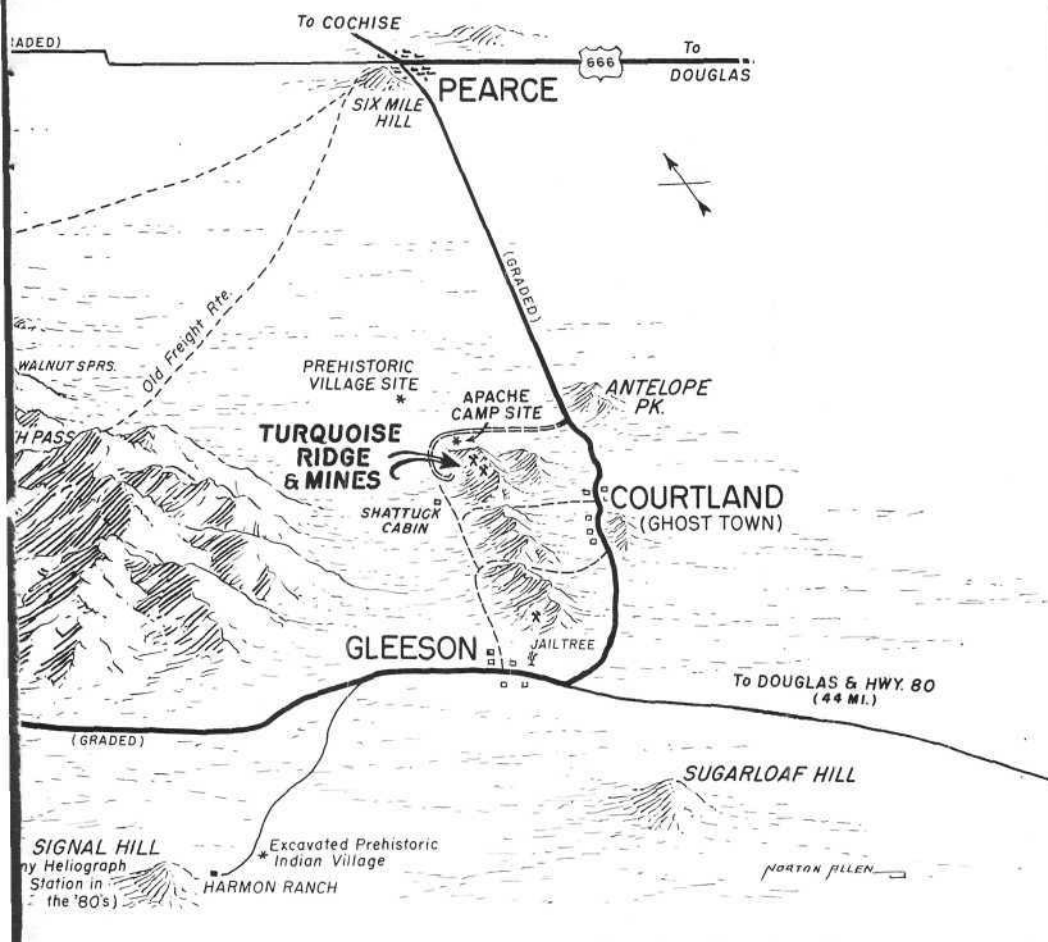
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The Mayfields ask but two things. For your own sake be careful! The hills are full of abandoned mine shafts and volcanic caves. And second, don't be a vandal. Leave Gleeson as you found it—a peaceful and slumbering town which may someday once again reawaken. □



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# TRAIL TO MAZOURKA

**R**OLLING OVER in the sleeping bag I looked up and saw Mt. Whitney holding her blue-grey craggy peaks out to warm in the rays of California's morning sun. A small lonesome cloud drifted around and then finally hid itself from view in the portals.

Close by, Lone Pine Creek rushed past, the water leaping and laughing as it bounced off boulders and ran helter-skelter over branches of overhanging trees, creating riffles in a miniature white water run, and then resting in a deep quiet pool.

The smell of bacon and eggs frying lifted me out of my reverie and my sleeping bag. It was going to be a big day and when you regress from 1970 to 1862 you had better get an early start.

Within an hour Harry, our dog, Brandy, and I were exiting through the Alabama Hills and headed toward a whole

canyon full of history. Just south of Independence on U.S. 395, we turned onto Mazourka Canyon Road and faced the Inyo Mountains. Inyo is an Indian name meaning "dwelling place of a great spirit." In April, 1860, the New World Mining and Exploration Company led by Colonel H. P. Russ came over the Walker Pass from San Francisco and located near the Owens River just south of Independence. Like the Paiutes, they, too, had their eyes directed toward the "great spirit" in the mountains but they saw the "dwelling place" full of gold.

Finding such a gifted mountain enticed the company to move closer to its treasures and they organized the Russ District. They staked out several mines, the most productive being the Eclipse, Ida and the Union. Then a prospecting soldier from Camp Independence found gold on a



spur of the Inyos and the San Carlos Mining and Exploration Company was born. Shortly thereafter a rich vein of galena was found. The combination of this energetic mining and the need for housing created new towns.

At first the Paiutes were friendly but as the miners were followed by stockmen and ranchers they began defending their territory where they had been the landlords from the dawn of tribal existence. Bloody battles interrupted but did not halt the settlers.

In October, 1863, Bend City was built just three miles down river. As if it wasn't enough that they had to contend with the Indians, the two towns went into competition. San Carlos donated a free ferry across the Owens River to her populace.

Not wanting to be outdone, Bend City



by Betty J. Tucker



decided to build a bridge. This started an inner village squabble. The up-towners wanted the bridge at the upper end of town and the down-towners wanted it at the lower end. They voted and the down-towners won. Aggravated at this turn of events, the up-towners decided to build their own. This resulted in unknown persons firing the dry river grass. After eight horses were burned and had to be shot, the whole town sobered up and hired Thomas Passmore to construct a \$2000 bridge which was paid for mainly by the up-towners.

I should have said settled down instead of sobered up as these two towns would have made Carry Nation proud. The Union men held a meeting to vote for delegates to a county convention in Visalia resulting in interesting and unusual action in a time when a bottle was as

much of a part of the scene as a pick and shovel.

The Delta newspaper of July 2, 1863 reported the delegates were instructed to "vote for no man who drank whiskey or played cards." Considering the potency of the patent medicines it was no big thing, unless you happened to be a saloon keeper. Life was not easy on the local pub owner. He even found himself responsible for any trial expenses of any patron committing a crime while under the influence of liquor. Most keepers of the cork moved on to damper pastures.

Before long San Carlos had two stores, two butcher shops, two assay offices, an express office, one saloon and hoped Wells Fargo would honor them with an office.

By December 17, 1863 Bend City had 30 adobe houses and planned a grand ball for Christmas Eve. A little over a month later, January 28, 1864, they boasted, "We now have five mercantile houses, two eating houses, two blacksmith shops, shoe shop, saddle and harness maker, tailor shop and a laundry conducted by Chung Ah Ting and lady. There is an abundance of everything to eat and wear. Boiled shirts and blacked boots have become common."

Farming in Owens Valley was successful and supplied the miners and town folk with plenty of corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes and melons. This, along with the meat derived from bear, deer, antelope, sagehen, grouse,

*Continued*

*Opposite page: Remnants and relics of a long-gone resident of Bend City. Left: All that remains of Bend City where it once thrived along the Owens River. Now it has fallen and even the river has abandoned it. Below: One of many metal chimneys that decorate the ground at Bend City.*





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fish and beef cattle gave them a good diet for as long as they could afford to pay for it.

San Carlos never grew to the extent that Bend City did but the towns people had spirit. The San Carlos Company hurried the completion of its mill in time to blast its steam whistle on July 4, 1864. It had five 750-pound stamps and a separator. The buildings, constructed of stone set in lime mortar, were the pride of San Carlos.

Bend City and San Carlos had all of the ingredients needed to make promising cities. Mines popped up all over the hills—both placer and lode. The first range of the Inyo foothills was a complete network of leads to the richest of minerals. There was the Blue Bell mine at the head of Mazourka Canyon and the famed Santa Rita mine located on one of the canyon offshoots.

Severe winters and hot summers liberally peppered with numerous Indian raids tried the miners' souls. They spent much of their time preparing for and combating the "hostiles." Although Camp Independence was only a few miles away the "pesky savages" seemed to appear out of nowhere with their hit and run tactics.

Before the year 1864 was over the settlers found themselves in even more difficulty. Inertia was setting in. Most of the mines had not been handled properly, there was not enough money backing them and the cost was prohibitive. They were surrounded by a wealth of food and minerals but couldn't afford them.

By January 3, 1866 the people had moved "bag and burro" to the newly established town of Independence and soldiers were stationed in the abandoned towns to prevent the Indians from firing the buildings. This wasn't enough protection, however, for on the night of March 11 four houses in San Carlos were burned. The Paiutes killed stock within one mile of Camp Independence. Seeing the abandoned towns the Indians thought they had the white intruders on the run. They met with Captain Noble at Camp Independence and offered all the wealth of their nation — four ponies, eleven buckskins, a rusty dinner bell, 25 dimes, ten dollars gold—if the "banner of stars" would leave the valley. The offer was rejected.

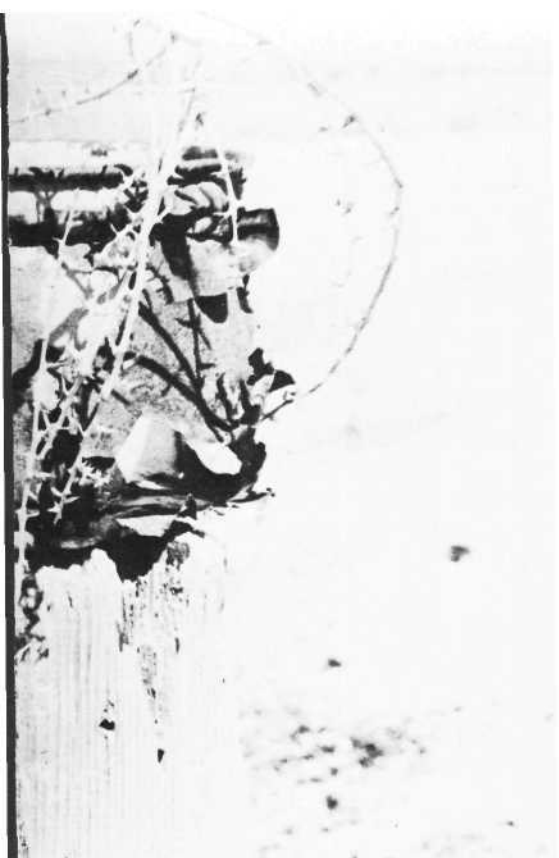
The battles went on but it took the



earthquake of March 26, 1872 to really flatten out the remains of these ambitious years. The main shock lasted three minutes. It was preceded by preliminary shakes as much as ten days in advance. Two hundred tremors were recorded up to five o'clock the following afternoon. The sites of Bend City and San Carlos were left beside an empty ravine instead of a river bank as the mighty Owens River changed course and flowed near Independence. After this final disaster they were allowed to sink back into the desert.

We jostled along in our dune buggy, Brandy's ears standing out in the wind like a doggy Dumbo as we searched the desert for the remains. Sure enough, 4.3 miles from Independence, near a transmission tower, we found Bend City. You can tell about the former inhabitants by the things they left behind. The area is covered with broken pottery — thick cream and brown crocks, dainty blue and pink flowered china, heavy coffee mugs, ornate slop jars (thunder mugs), enameled kettles, long-handled drinking cups, sheet metal chimneys and old shoes. The place should be a treasure hunters paradise as it looked as if it hadn't been dug over.

San Carlos is just three miles north on a narrow dirt road. There is a small mountain on the right and San Carlos is



*A victim of "potshots" this old veteran from Bend City fades into the past.*

across Whiteside Tunnel. It was originally dug out and salted with getting-rich-quick in mind. This tunnel is so securely braced that it was declared safe enough for a fallout shelter.

The sun was warming up the earth as we climbed into the dune buggy and went back down to the valley floor. Across the valley and in the foothills of the Sierras we could see the light brown

roads and trails still reaching up—searching. We joined the tide of campers, cars, trucks and trailers speeding past Independence toward padded campsites—little aware of the history surrounding them.

Secure in having touched the fingertips of the past, we went back to our own special campsite at the edge of Sequoia National Park. Alone once again with only the bees droning and the creek pouring out its mirth, I looked up at Mt. Whitney and winked. I had shared a tiny bit of history with her. □

on the left just as you round the mountain. There isn't much to find here except signs of heavy reddish adobe for their buildings.

Further up in the canyon we came



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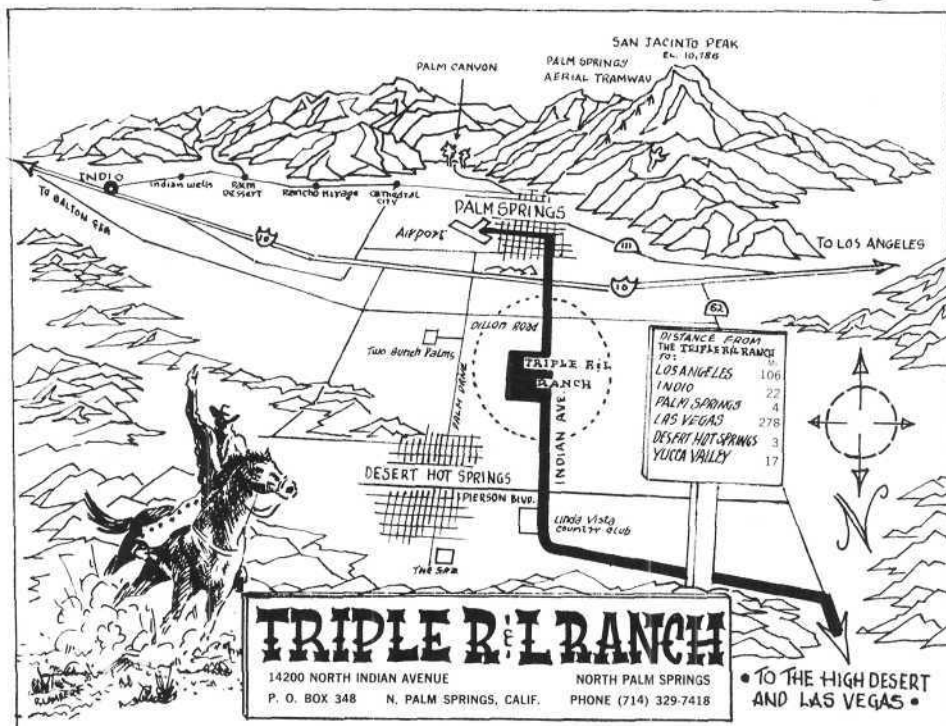
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# Rambling on Rocks

by Glenn  
and Martha Vargas

Those of you that have been following the present series on petrified wood may notice that the illustration with this column is out of place. Perhaps some of you have also noticed that illustrations of standing petrified tree stumps appeared in two previous columns. The answer to all this is that somewhere along the line some of us goofed. We would like to blame it on something, like too much vacation, but 'tis not so, we simply did not give your editor complete enough instruction before we left for our vacation, and he did his best to outguess us, but fell short.

The present accompanying illustration should have appeared in the August issue, and those of the August and October issues should be here. We must also confess that the illustration in the September issue should have been in the September column!

**T**HIS MONTH we are deviating from our policy of discussing geologic features of our deserts, and will describe a petrified forest in Wyoming. The term "petrified forest" is used very loosely, and generally covers any area where petrified wood is found plentifully. When one hears the term petrified forest, the thing that usually comes to mind is that the trees are standing. Very few areas contain trees that are actually standing in the same position as they were when alive. There is, however, a wonderful example of a standing fossil forest to be seen in Yellowstone National Park. Perhaps we should state it differently, and say it is a wonderful example of a series of forests.

The history of this series of forests is very interesting. Near the southern end of Yellowstone Park is the remains of what was once a very large volcano, now known as Mt. Mazama. If geologists have made correct interpretations of all the signs, somewhere back many thousands of years ago, this volcano belched forth in a huge eruption, and covered thousands of square miles with volcanic ash. The eruption was so violent, and over such a long period of time, that complete forests were completely buried, with most of the trees left standing.

As is the usual behavior of volcanoes, this one had its period of violence, and then settled down to what is known as a quiescent period. This period of inactivity was long enough to allow the ash beds to become populated with living things and another forest that resembled very closely the one that stood before the eruption. A mature forest containing large trees well in excess of 100 years would require some 300 to 500 years before the ash beds would be able to produce it.

How much time elapsed after the forest became mature is not known, but finally Mt. Mazama again blew its top and buried the second forest.

Again the volcano went into a quiescent period, and a third forest grew on the ashes burying the first forest. In order to shorten a very long story, we will simply say that Mt. Mazama, and the following forests, went through the same cycle for more than 20 times! The magnitude of such a sequence of events is almost staggering to the imagination. The volcano had to go through at least 20 periods of quiescence, each long enough to allow a mature forest to appear. It is very possible that some of the quiet periods were short, and erased the beginnings of a new forest, but such an event left little or no record as far as trees were concerned.

As part of the story, the volcano itself, or perhaps others in the vicinity, as part of their subterranean activities, sent up large amounts of heat and attendant dissolved minerals that seeped up into the buried forests and infiltrated the trees. The process of infiltration and petrification was probably more or less simultaneous with the burying of the later forests, but obviously had to continue past the covering of the final forest. The infiltra-

tion of the final forest was probably the last gasp of Mt. Mazama. The forces of erosion now began to tear away at the volcano, and have reduced it to a feature that only geologists can recognize as an extinct volcano.

At the same time that erosion was reducing the volcano, the same thing was happening to the stack of forests. Today, the most important remains of it is what is known as Specimen Ridge. This ridge lies in the extreme northern part of the park, slightly westward of center. It extends south, south-easterly for about 20 miles. To look at a map of Yellowstone, and pick out Specimen Ridge, is enough to warm the heart of any rockhound. A number of creeks flow off the north-easterly face, and they have such delightful names as Amethyst Creek, Chalcedony Creek, Agate Creek, Jasper Creek, Opal Creek and others! We have visited the ridge twice, and did not find any of these minerals, except the agatized wood discussed below. One of the early park rangers told us of finding a mineral dealer who was collecting amethyst crystals from the ridge. The same amethysts are mentioned in some of the popular mineralogy books. The crystals were probably the lining of hollow petrified logs. If amethyst is or was to be found there, then it is reasonable to assume that the other creek names, as well as the ridge itself, were based upon more than imagination.

To get onto Specimen Ridge is no easy task, but for those who want the experience and thrill of climbing through geological history, it is well worth while. It is possible to drive an automobile very close to the ridge by going to the north-west corner of the park and then turning east toward the town of Cody. There is a ranger station east of the junction of the west and north roads. Information can be obtained there as to how to make the trip. Also at the station, some of the petrified logs can be seen. At times, the rangers take groups on trips over the north face and into the upper forests. We prefer the approach from the northwest as it allows one to climb up through successive forests. We counted at least ten that we could be certain were separate forests. Our approach, however, is the most difficult as it goes directly up the very steep face of the ridge through an elevation of more than 2000 feet. *Continued on page 46*



Staff photo

A Valley of Sand Verbena near Palm Springs

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# Woman's Viewpoint



**H**AVE YOU seen the brightly colored dry plants on the market this fall? Furniture and import stores have tubs of dry weeds and garden plants in vivid colors—the perfect accent for any decor. If you have a corner that needs a dash of color, maybe you'll want a bouquet of orange teasel burrs or kelly green mullein spears.

By experimenting I found dry plants can be colored at home. Pick long-stemmed weeds or cultivated flowers with firmly attached heads. If the plant is still green hang it upside down in a well-ventilated area until dry. If you desire the stems curved, prop the plant upright in an empty vase, bend the stem, and tie until dry. Yarrow, sea oats, dock cattails, teasel, burdock, Pearly Everlasting, rabbit brush, yucca and many cultivated plants can be used.

One method of coloring dry plants is to dye them with the same powder dye

used for cloth. Mix one package of dye with one quart of water. An empty milk carton makes an ideal disposable container. Hold the bottom of the stem and plunge the head into the dye solution. Swish up and down until the dye seeps into every part.

Shake off excess dye and hang plant upside down to dry. Finding a spot where the concentrated dye can drip is a problem. Outdoors is probably the best area for this project.

Because the dye can only reach a few inches below the flower head, also dip the bottom part of the stem in the dye. If this leaves an uncolored space in the center of the stem, paint some dye on it with a water color brush.

The yarrow in my moonshine jug has been colored a deep red with dye. From this bouquet I have noticed the sunlight rapidly fades the colors.



*Dry flower arrangement*

Many plants and colors look best with spray paint rather than dye. Dry plants that are naturally dark colored cannot be covered with dye. And to obtain deep

black, clear white or pastels, spray painting is preferred.

Spray paint that is safe for styrofoam is the only type to use on dry plants. Regular spray enamel is too thick and has a heavy look. Follow the directions on the can for perfect results.

Is there a corner in your house that could use a splash of color? Imagine a massive bouquet of purple yarrow in an old brass spittoon; or a few lemon yellow teasel burrs in a black umbrella holder; or an arrangement of natural cattails and lime-colored sea oats in a tall wood cube. Let your imagination run wild on this project.

## CACTUS PEAR SALAD

1 pint creamed cottage cheese  
1 small can crushed pineapple  
8 ripe cactus pears  
1/2 cup salad dressing  
1/2 cup pineapple juice  
maraschino cherries  
lettuce

Peel and rinse the pears. Remove seeds from the halves of fruit. Soak the fruit in pineapple juice for 15 minutes. Mix cottage cheese and well-drained pineapple. Remove pear halves from juice and arrange petal fashion on lettuce leaf. Pile cheese mixture in center of fruit. Spoon salad dressing over cheese and top with a maraschino cherry. To pick the pears use a pair of kitchen tongs with a sharp knife. Brush the small thorns off with a pastry brush or a small bundle of twigs from a nearby bush. Remaining thorns can be singed off at home. To peel the fruit, stick a fork in the bud end and peel the skin down towards the fork. Slice the fruit off close to the fork.

*Ann Lincoln, Santa Paula, Calif.*

## CHOKE CHERRY COUGH CURE

Place black, very ripe choke cherries into preserving pan with enough cold water to prevent burning. Stew slowly until fruit is very soft. Strain through coarse muslin, squeezing well until only the stalks, skins and stones remain. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar and 2 tablespoons honey. Mix to consistency of thick cream. Pour into jars and seal. Give one teaspoonful for troublesome cough.

*Margaret Hansen, Klamath Falls, Ore.*

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# Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope.



## Mother Lode Book . . .

Your September, 1970 issue presents a strong Mother Lode orientation. I think I've seen the trend developing in prior issues. Well and good.

In the way of a guidebook, Sunset Book's *Gold Rush Country* is a fine document. However, I'd like to mention another gem of a handbook for Gold Rush buffs. It is George Koenig's pocket-size *Ghosts of the Gold Rush*, published by La Sesta Press of Glendale, California.

Koenig reports first-hand what he saw and how he got there. The book covers the entire Mother Lode area. It will appeal to those who are interested in trekking off of Highway 49 through little-known sites whose ruins are gone, or will soon be gone.

The major points of interest are also well covered, and the little book is unique in its thorough geographical coverage. The marvel is that all the dozens of places—don't look for them on a gas station map—are accessible with the family auto. Many of the roads are dirt, but are fully passable. I've tested the book and it works.

DONALD F. MEADOWS,  
Yuba City, California.

*Editor's Note: My apologies to my friend, George Koenig. Somehow in the rush of getting out the Gold Rush issue, Ghosts of the Gold Rush was not mentioned. It is an excellent book and highly recommended.*

## That's Progress . . .

Relative to my article *Mines of Mineral King* in the August '70 issue, you may get a letter to the editor and wonder what happened. The photo I sent you showing the butcher shop, the last of the early buildings, was taken in July, 1969. I returned to Mineral King this July and found the building is no longer there. It apparently was removed to make room to park more cars at the start of the trails to Timber Gap and Monarch Lakes. This is progress?

MIKE ENGLE,  
San Clemente, California.

## Dune Buggies . . .

My husband and I enjoy Desert Magazine and keep several issues in our camper as a guide to interesting places. We were in Palm Desert last December and plan to retire at Morongo Valley.

We also agree with your policies regarding the proper use of the beautiful mountains and deserts. That is the reason for this letter. Are there any areas around Palm Desert where there are sand dunes on which we could drive a dune buggy?

MRS. J. K. ASHCRAFT,  
Wichita, Kansas.

*Editor's Note: Dune buggies are allowed in the sand dunes in Imperial County just off State Route 78 between Brawley and Glamis. Look for the turnoff designated as the Hugh Osborn Park Lookout.*

## Photo Credits . . .

*Editor's Note: In two recent issues credits for photographs were inadvertently missed. The photograph of Tiburcio Vasquez in the article, Vasquez Rocks by Helen Walker in the September '70 issue was through the courtesy of the California State Library. In the article, Doing Nutting by Elizabeth Beebe in the August '70 issue, the photographs were through the courtesy of the Nevada Press.*



## Apple Dolls . . .

Enjoy your fine magazine and the Woman's Viewpoint Page. I also like making apple dolls and thought I would send you an additional tip for their preservation. (Woman's Viewpoint, August '70.)

After peeling the apple, I insert a lead pencil and let the head dry on this. After they are formed, I make a mixture of Orris Root, Cinnamon and Allspice and sprinkle inside of the apple in the pencil hole. This keeps the apple from getting bugs in it. I also use the head to set the apple on, as it can be turned in any direction. The pencil is just slipped down into the center of the body. The apples that have worked best for my dolls have been Golden Delicious. They have a larger head.

I am enclosing a picture of four of my apple dolls. I think they are a lot of fun to make and just turn into a personality all of their own; a good cure for boredom.

MRS. MYRON J. PETERS,  
San Diego, California.

# Calendar of Western Events

*This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. However, we must receive the information at least two months prior to the event. Be certain to furnish complete details.*

OCTOBER 24, ANTIQUE BARBED WIRE SHOW, 2200 Santa Rosa Ave. So., Santa Rosa, Calif. Sponsored by the California Barbed Wire Association. Free admission. Buy, sell and trade.

OCTOBER 24 & 25, SAN DIEGO COUNTY ROCKHOUND GEMBOREE sponsored by the San Diego County Gem & Mineral Societies, Scottish Rite Masonic Memorial Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South. Write E. B. Twiss, 8591 Mellmanor Drive, La Mesa, Calif. 92041.

OCTOBER 24 & 25, ANTIQUE BOTTLE SHOW & SALE, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 North Verdugo, Glendale, Calif. Sponsored by the Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club. Admission 50 cents, children under 12 free.

OCTOBER 31 & NOVEMBER 1, FREE GEM & MINERAL SHOW sponsored by the Montebello Mineral and Lapidary Society, Masonic Temple Bldg., 6310 East Olympic Blvd., East Los Angeles, Calif.

OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1, ALL MINERAL SHOW sponsored by the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, Pasadena City College, 1570 Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, Calif. Mineral Dealers. Admission 50 cents.

NOVEMBER 3-6, 1970 NORRA MEXICAN 1000 ENSENADA TO LA PAZ RACE. Write NORRA, 1616 Victory Blvd., Suite 200, Glendale, Calif. 91201.

NOVEMBER 7 & 8, GEM & MINERAL SHOW, SMORGASBORD, FLOWER SHOW, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Free parking and admission to shows.

NOVEMBER 25-30, ROCKHOUND ROUND-UP sponsored by San Diego Councils, Gold Rock Ranch, Ogilby Road off Route 8, 14 miles west of Yuma. Camping, field trips, gold panning, swap table, auctions—all free. Write Box 2132, San Diego, Calif. 92112.

JANUARY 18, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY, Chicago, Illinois. Deadline January 18. For information on entries write Nature Camera Club, 407 Eugenie St., Chicago, Ill. 60614.



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*Petrified wood slice on the left is just as it was taken from the saw.*

*The slice on the right was immersed in liquid bleach for a few days, and the enclosed wood was etched away revealing the wood pattern.*



## RAMBLING ON ROCKS

*Continued from page 42*

As one goes up the mountain, the first signs are small chips of white agatized wood that have been washed down to the flats. Next, small logs and limb sections are to be seen. If the small creeks are investigated, log sections up to three feet in diameter can be found trapped. Finally a standing tree can be seen; some are nearly completely overgrown by living trees. The usual standing petrified tree is about two to three feet in diameter, and up to 20 feet tall. These trees were undoubtedly much taller when living, but now the upper part is gone, part probably broken off at the time of the eruption, and part after being uncovered by erosion.

Those that will make the effort to reach the extreme northern top of the ridge will see the group of three trees illustrated. The largest is more than five feet in diameter, and probably was about 500 years of age at the time of burial.

The types of trees that grew here, at least in the upper levels, evidently were not greatly different from what might be expected in the region today. It is very difficult to completely identify a fossil tree from its wood structure without laboratory equipment, but these are obviously the type that appeared late in the earth's history. By looking at rock chips found in the area we were able to find leaf prints that resembled sycamore or maple. We also found what we were quite certain were prints of pine needles.

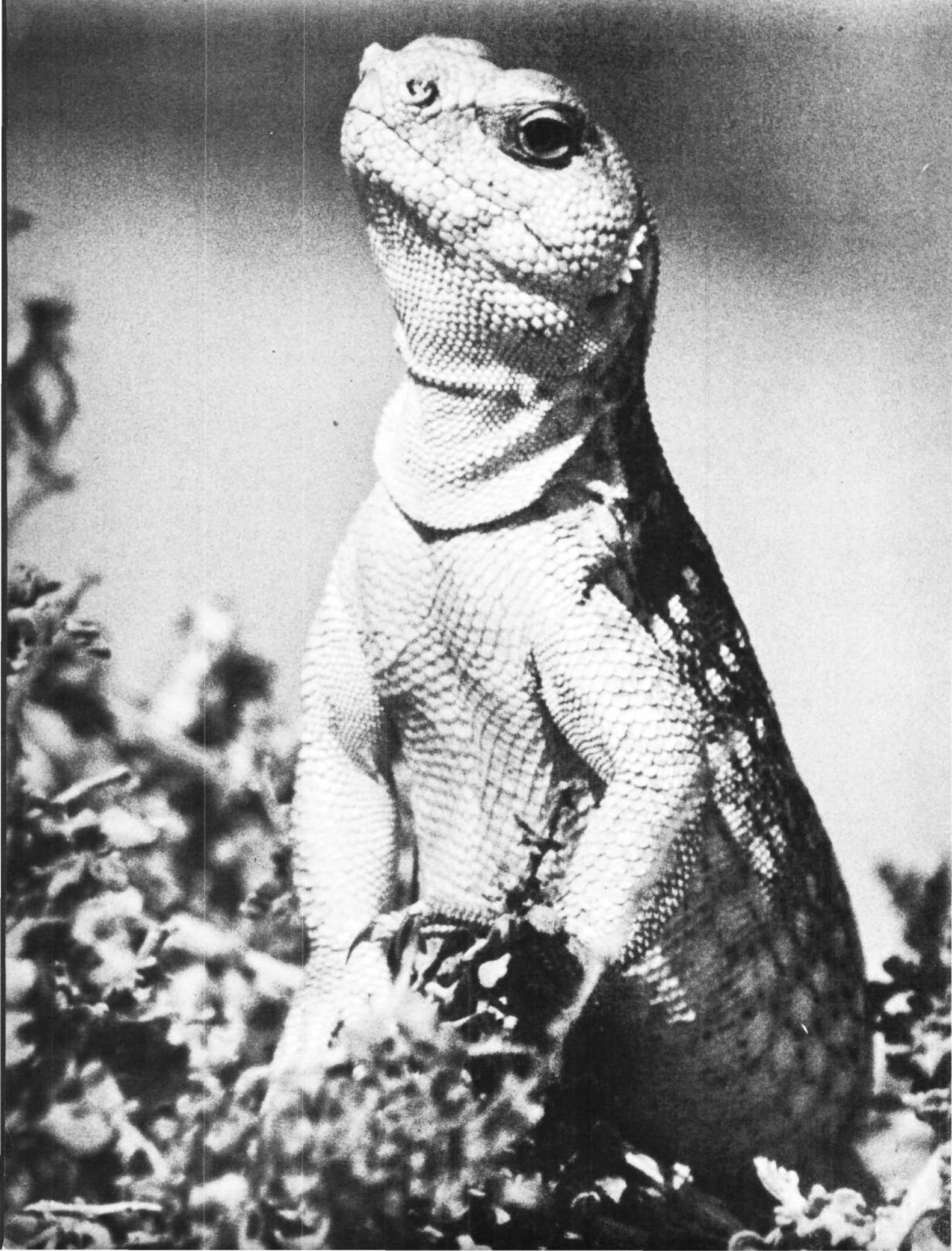
The agatized wood is not colorful,

being nearly pure white. It would not lend itself to lapidary work, but the grain pattern is very clean and well defined. Many of the pieces look exactly like chips of wood, having split along the weak zone of the still-enclosed wood. To those who are used to the very highly colored petrified wood from Arizona and other popular locations, the wood from Specimen Ridge might be a disappointment. It is probably just as well, because collecting is not allowed. Also, one needs to only look down the mountain to the beautiful panorama below him; the long arduous trip down is much easier without a load of stone. □

**Desert Life**

by Hans Baerwald

When most other desert lizards are seeking the cool confines of rocks and bushes, the mighty iguana, whose scientific name is *Dipsosaurus dorsalis* (meaning dry-lizard with back crest) can hot-foot around the desert and be king of all he surveys. Naturalist-photographer Hans Baerwald used his 35mm Exakta with 600mm lens to capture this portrait of "the king."





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Statement of ownership, management and circulation (Act of October 23, 1962 Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code).

1. Date of filing: September 15, 1970.
2. Title of publication: DESERT Magazine.
3. Frequency of issue: Monthly.
4. Location of known office of publication: Palm Desert, Calif. 92260.
5. Location of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers: Palm Desert, California 92260.
6. Names and addresses of publisher and editor: Publisher: William Knyvett, 79-890 Horse-shoe Rd., Indio, California 92201.  
Editor: Jack Pepper, 73-170 Tumbleweed Lane, Palm Desert, California 92260.
7. Owners: Jack Pepper and William and Joyce Knyvett.
8. Bondholders, mortgagors, security holders: None.
9. Re No. 8: None.
10. Average over 12 month period of issues from November 1969 to October 1970: 46,296 copies printed; paid circulation: 22,000 news-stands, 23,500 mail subscriptions, 45,500 total paid. 300 free distribution, 45,800 total distribution, 496 office use, spoiled, etc.

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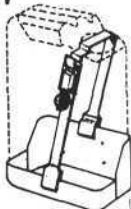
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*Old well is more recent addition to the Summit area, but it too, is abandoned.*

## GOLD AT THE SUMMIT

*Continued from page 23*

unbroken. No luck! A half-mile east of our camp (across the railroad tracks) we came upon a sizeable placer operation. A portion of the sign on the old tin shack had been shot off so we can't be sure but feel it was probably the Summit Placer and Gold Company Claim. It was evidently relocated in 1967 but there was no equipment on the property. We met no one during our explorations nor did we hear a train pass along the tracks.

During the day, as we rode over the area on trail bikes, it appeared to be such a desolate land. Though it was only April, the temperature hovered at 94 degrees during midday. We couldn't even scare up a jackrabbit which really wasn't too surprising since vegetation seemed too sparse to support any life.

After dinner the first evening, we were enjoying the slight breezes of dusk when the earlier lonely land began to come alive. Several Gambel sparrows alighted on nearby bushes, probably hoping for a

handout—which was forthcoming. Two long, slim lizards with red spots elected to chase insects through our "open patio" and a sizeable jackrabbit ambled up the wash to view the intruders.

Just before dark, the most interesting visitors arrived—two Burrowing Owls who swooped in over us several times, dropping lower with each pass. They chattered one to the other as if to say "Who are the new folks in town?" "Lobo," our 100-pound, Alaskan Male-mute, eyed all the visitors calmly from his resting position near the trailer. However, the last low swoop of the owls seemed too great a trespass. He raised upon his haunches and gave his mournful wolf-howl—the owls departed pronto!

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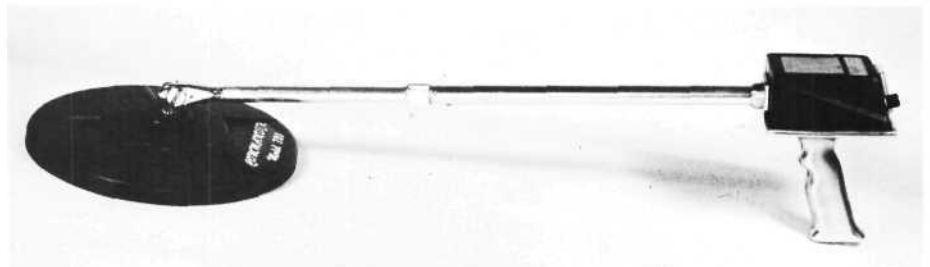
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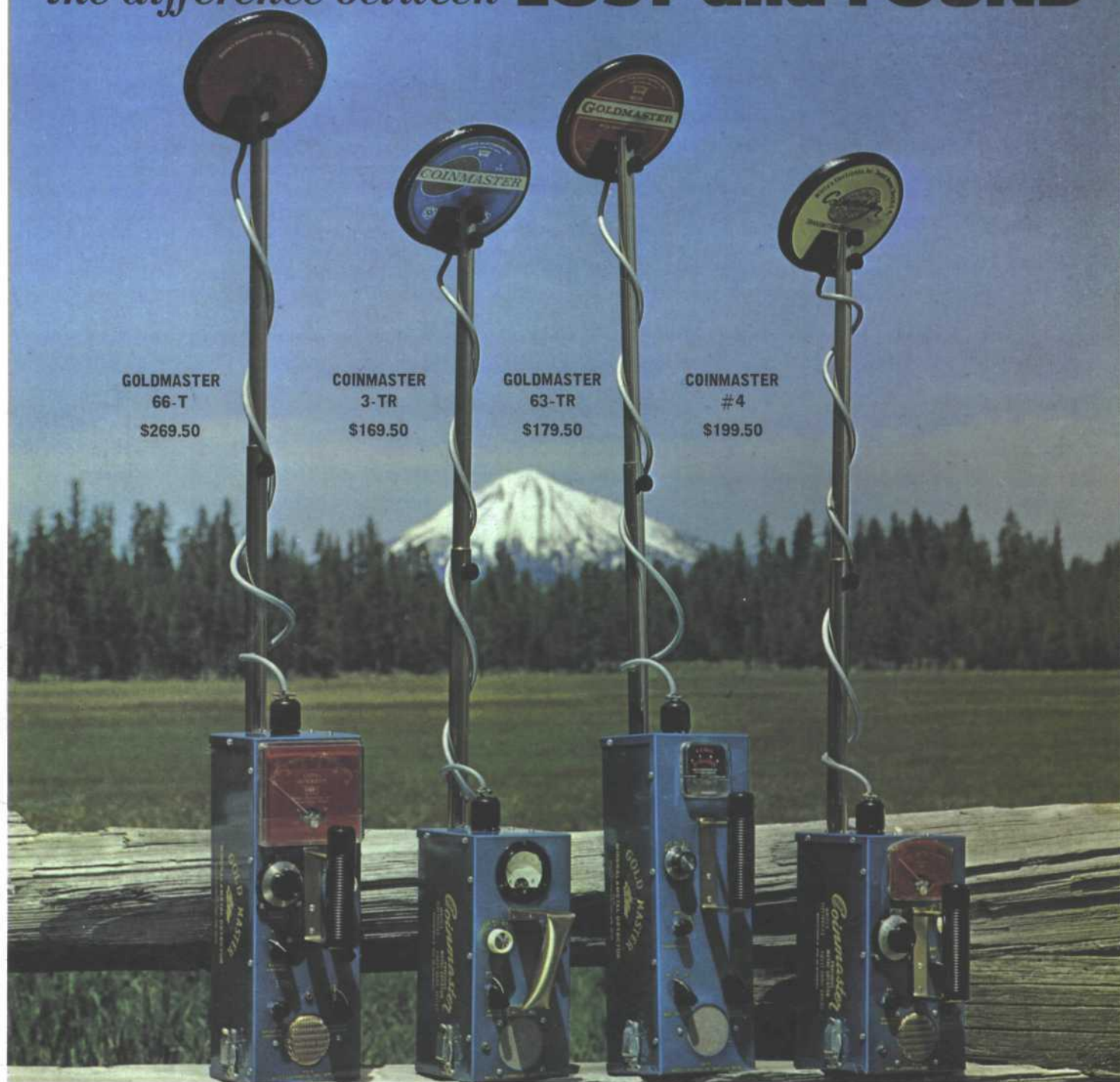


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